THE RIGHT WAY

Shaikul Islam Ibn Taimiyah



DARUSSALAM
GLOBAL LEADER IN ISLAMIC BOOKS

THE RIGHT WAY

A Summarised Translation

By: Shaikhul Islam Ibn Taimiyah
Published By: Darussalam Publishers



Contents

Publisher's Note

No doubt, alien philosophies and ideologies pause a threat to Islam. But who can deny the internal deviations and dissensions which have played a greater role in tampering with the purity of Islamic beliefs and simplicity of its practices?

At the core of Islam is Tawhid (Oneness of Allah) from which emanate both the creed and deeds of Muslims. Thus the credal deviations and heresies as well as the innovated practices affect the purity of Tawhid. Notwithstanding almost all great men of learning and reformers have understood and declared this fact, Sheikhul Islam Ibn Taimya was incomparably vocal and his voice was dauntlessly express. All of his works and Fatawa (legal rulings) testify to it.

Our present society -teeming with polytheistic and innovated practices such as invoking the dead, festivals at shrines, seeking help of soothsayers and exorcists, celebration of the birth or death anniversaries of Prophets and saints, unlawful vow and offering, unlawful journeys to mosques and shrines, unlawful sanctification of persons, places and times, belief in omens and countless other superstitions and so on - stands in need of Sheikhul Islam's works that have educated and guided both the commoners and scholars for the last several centuries.

The Right Way is a summarized translation of Ibn Taimya's great work, Iqtida-us-Siratil Mustaqeem. I hope and pray that the living topics discussed herein in a highly erudite but lucid style, which has

been more or less transferred into English, would enlighten the readers and guide the seekers of truth.

A brief account of the life of Sheikhul Islam is also produced on the forthcoming pages.

Abdul Malik Mujahid
General Manager

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds and blessings be upon His Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), the seal of Messengers, and his household and his pure Companions.

Shaikhul Islam Imam Ibn Taimiyah

Birth and Education

Ahmed Bin Abdul Haleem Bin Abdussalam Bin Taimiyah was born in the town of Harran (Turkey), in 661 AH (1263 CE). His father was a leading scholar of Hanbali school of Islamic law, and so were his uncle and grandfather.

When Ibn Taimiyah was seven years old, his family members left their native place and took refuge in Damascus before the Mongolian invasion came.

Endowed with a penetrating intellect and wonderful memory, Ibn Taimiyah mastered the various disciplines of Islamic study at an early age and read extensively the books of the various sects and religions in existence at that time. The number of his teachers exceeds two hundred- Shamsuddin Al-Maqdisi, first Hanbali Chief Justice of Syria, was among them.

Ibn Taimiyah was barely seventeen, when the Chief Justice authorized him to issue Fatwa (legal verdict). At the same age, he started delivering lectures. When he was thirty, he was offered the office of Chief Justice which he refused.

A Mujtahid

Although Ibn Taimiyah's education was essentially that of a Hanbali theologian and jurist, he was equally conversant with other schools of Islamic law. He was also familiar with heresiographical literature, in particular of philosophy and Sufism. He was undoubtedly an original thinker (Mujtahid).

Much of Ibn Taimiyah's time and effort was spent defending the orthodox Islamic position against a tidal wave of deviation which had swept over the Muslim nation. In all his writings and reformative efforts, he accepted the Qur'an and Sunnah as the basic criteria. In matters where there was no clear guidance from the Qur'an and Sunnah, he ventured into rational thought and took the path of Ijtihad.

A Mujaddid

Ibn Taimiyah was a great reformer who relentlessly fought against the heretic beliefs and innovated practices that have crept into the body of Islam. He endeavoured to revive the religion of Islam in its pristine purity and revolutionary spirit. His approach was naturally two-folded: (a) to bring about a revolution against Shirk and innovations (Bid'ah) and (b) to emphasize the concept of Tawhid with all its implications.

In this effort he had to encounter with those who upheld Greek philosophy and the Sufi masters who maintained the ideas of pantheism, Gnosticism and asceticism. He attacked the Jahmiyah and Jabariyah (the determinists who denied man's freedom of choice and responsibility) as well as the Qadriyah and Mu 'tazilah (the rationalists who denied predestination).

As a result, he faced many difficulties from both the prominent sectarian scholars of his time and from the authorities who supported them. His clashes with them led to his imprisonment on numerous occasions.

A Mujahid

Ibn Taimiyah fought not only against internal enemies of Islam, but also against its external enemies by both his Fatwas (Islamic legal rulings) and his physical participation in battles.

When the Mongols invaded Syria, he flung himself into the stream of affairs and exhorted people to Jihad against the Mongols. After a pitched battle at Shaqhab in which Ibn Taimiyah fought bravely, the Syrian-Egyptian army emerged victorious. Apart from this, he took part in some other expeditions also.

His fame as a scholar and a brave fighter eventually made more scholars jealous of him. His opponents dug up an old Fatwa, related to tomb visit, given by him some seventeen years before, and interpreted it provocatively. A great dispute arose and Ibn Taimiyah was imprisoned in 1326 CE. He died in 1328 while in prison in Damascus.

His Disciples

Ibn Taimiyah's disciples spread from Syria to Egypt. Some of them scattered to very far-off places. They preached and developed his intellectual heritage, and shared their master's persecutions. The most famous of them were Imam Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyah, Ibn Abdul Hadi, Ibn Kathir, Hafiz Dhahabi, Al-Mizzi, Muhammad Bin Muflih, Abu Hafs Al-Bazzar, Ibn Al-Wardi and Qadi Ibn Fadlullah.

His Impact

Ibn Taimiyah created a climate of revolutionary thinking both through his ideas and his reformist endeavours whose impact was felt not only in his own time but ever since. In his lifetime people were divided either into those who were strong opponents or strong supporters fully in agreement with him, or uncommitted, those who agreed with some views and disagreed with others. Ibn Taimiyah left behind a large number of books and disciplines. His opponents soon sank into anonymity, while the value of and appreciation for his works has increased.

In his own lifetime, Ibn Taimiyah's fame and influence extended beyond the boundaries of Egypt and Syria. When he was imprisoned for the last time in the citadel of Damascus, many letters came from the inhabitants of Baghdad protesting against his arrest and demanding his release. When he died, funeral prayers in absentia were performed even as far as China.

Almost all historians have recognized his deep impact on the most prominent reformer of eighteenth century, Sheikh Muhammad Bin Abdul Wahhab (d. 1792).

CHAPTER: THE UNBELIEVERS' RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

Numerous are the religious festivals and fairs of the unbelievers. Muslims need not know in full about these. They should know only this much that such and such days are considered as holy by the unbelievers. They should, at least, realize that the religious festivals and fairs celebrated by the unbelievers are the ones which are not prescribed by Islam. Rather, the unbelievers have invented these. Were some Muslims to celebrate these, it betrays either innovation on their part or their borrowing from the unbelievers, hence these are to be treated as innovation.

What follows is the discussion on certain innovations in which many are found engrossed.

One of these is Easter, at the conclusion of the Lent. The Christians celebrate it in commemoration of the supper sent down on Jesus's disciples. Many misdeeds are committed in this festival, for example, women appearing in public, burning incense at graves, spreading clothes at roofs, writing and pasting papers at doors, and selling and borrowing these as an act of worship.

To burn incense is a religious practice of Christians and Sabians. It has nothing to do with Muslims. This particular incense is similar to musk. It is inhaled and like other perfumes its use is permissible. However, it cannot be taken as part of worship.

Other rituals performed at Easter, for example, preparing sweet dish, frying, colouring eggs, gambling or selling coloured eggs to gamblers, etc. are acts of innovation.

Likewise, putting a red cross on the cattle or at trees by farmers at Easter, collecting particular types of clothes and seeking blessings

from these, women collecting olive leaves and taking bath from its water, abandoning the household chores, closing down shops and educational institutions and celebrating the day by declaring it as public holiday are acts of innovations.

The General Rule

The Shariah ruling is that Muslims should not do any particular thing on the religious festivals of unbelievers which they do not normally do in other days. Rather, they should treat these days like any other ordinary day. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had prohibited his Companions from sports and enjoyment on two particular days on which the pre-Islamic Arabs used to hold sports.

Likewise, he forbade them to sacrifice their animals at the places where the polytheists used to celebrate their festivals.

The unbelievers celebrate with much pomp and show a festival on 25th December in the belief that it is the birth day of Prophet Jesus (Peace be upon him). The rituals associated with the Christmas, for example, lighting fire, preparing sweet dishes, etc. are undesirable. It is an article of faith with Christians that it is a holy day. This view does not have any basis in Islam. This festival is not reported in the days of our pious predecessors. On later days Muslims appear to have borrowed it from Christians. Christians celebrate another religious festival in memory of Jesus's baptism. In immitating them some ignorant Muslims women take their children to public baths and believe that it is especially good for children. This is a Christian belief and Muslims are forbidden not to entertain it. The same holds true for Persian festivals of Nau Roz and other festivals of unbelievers.

Innovated Festivals and Fairs

To the same category belong all such festivals and fairs which have been innovated. All of them are evil and undesirable.

Muslims are prohibited from joining these religious festivals of the People of the Book and other unbelievers; on two grounds: first, it represents a resemblance to the unbelievers and secondly these are acts of innovations. All such festivals and fairs which have come into vogue as a result of innovation are to be treated in the same way, whether these resemble the practice of the unbelievers or not.

A Compact Ruling

All these fall under the category of innovation, as is evident from Jabir's report, cited by Muslim that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) used to deliver his sermon with this opening statement:

أما بعد: «فإنَّ خيرَ الحَدِيثِ كِتابُ اللهِ ، وخَيرَ الهَدي هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ ،
وشَرَّ الأُمُورِ محدَثَاتُها ، وكُلَّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلالَةٌ»

"The best word is the Book of Allah and the best way is that of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). The worst deed is innovation and each innovation is error." There is an additional remark in Nasai's narration to the effect:

«وكُلَّ ضَلالَةٍ في النَّارِ»

"Each error leads to Hell."

On the authority of Ayesha it is reported in Sahih al-Bukhari that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلاً لَيسَ عَلَيهِ أَمْرُنا فَهُوَ رَدٌّ»

"Whoever does an act which is not in agreement with our faith, such an act is rejected."

There is another report of similar import:

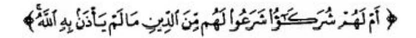
«مَنْ أَحْدَثَ في أمرِنَا هذَا ما لَيسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ»

"Whoever invents something in our faith which does not originally exist, has nothing to do with us." According to Arbad Ibn Sariyah, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إنَّهُ مَن يعِشْ منكُم بعدِي فَسَيَرَى اختلافاً كثيراً ، فعَلَيكُمْ بسُنَّتِي وسُنَّةِ الخُلَفاء الراشِدين من بَعدِي ، تَمَسَّكوا بهَا وعضُّوا عَلَيهَا بالنَّوَاجذِ ، وإيَّاكَم ومُحدَثَاتِ الأُمور ، فإنَّ كُلَّ بدعةٍ ضَلالَةٍ»

"Whoever survives me would observe many differences. However, you should follow my Sunnah and that of my rightly guided caliphs. Adhere to it firmly. Beware! Avoid innovation, for each innovation constitutes error. "

This lays down a compact rule, derived from Sunnah and consensus of the Ummah, and above all, from the Qur'an. Allah says:

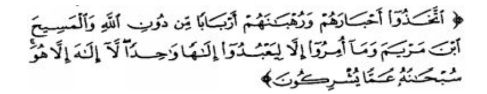


"Or have they partners with Allah, who have instituted for them a religion which Allah has not allowed" (Al-Shura, 42:21).

Fabricated Religion

One who considers something not prescribed by Allah as the one which would bring him closer to Allah or invites others to it or presents it as something obligatory by his word or deed, he is guilty of fabricating a religion which is not sanctioned by Allah. H someone is following such a person, he takes him as Allah's partner who is guilty of inventing a new faith, in contravention of divine command.

If the one who invents something does so out of a genuine misunderstanding, he will be forgiven. This is, however, subject to the condition that his interpretation should be related to something in which a lapse may be forgiven. Rather, one would be rewarded for his interpretation. However, no one is allowed to follow him in something, of which the flaw is manifest. Allah says:



"They took their rabbis and their monks to be their Lords besides Allah, and Jesus, son of Mary, while they were commanded to worship none but Allah. Praise and glory be to Him from having the partners they associate" (Al-Tawbah, 9:31).

On hearing this verse Adi Ibn Hatim said to the Prophet:

قَالَ عَدِيُّ بْنُ حَاتِمٍ لِلنَّبِيِّ ﷺ ((يارَسُولَ اللهِ ، مَا عَبَدُوهُم قال: ما عَبَدُوهُمْ ، وَلكِن أَحلُّوا لَهُم الحَرَامَ ، فَأطَاعُوهم ، وحَرَّمُوا عَلَيهِم الحَلَال ، فأطَاعُوهم))

"The people of the Book did not worship their rabbis or 1nonks." The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) replied: "They certainly did. Their rabbis and monks held forbidden things as lawful and lawful things as unlawful and their followers obeyed them, and

by doing so they really worshipped them." (Tirmidhi and Musnad Ahmad)

So if one yields to someone's interference in matters of faith, he stands condemned. One may be forgiven or even rewarded for his own interpretation. And in this case he does not stand condemned. For, there is not a very strong case against him. However, one who does not revert to follow the truth even after it has become manifest to him, out of his stubbornness or lethargy or any other reason in that he does not look for the truth at all, he would be punished.

Why are the Polytheists Condemned

Allah has condemned polytheists, especially on two grounds. First, they took partners with Allah, without authority. Second, they held things as unlawful which have not been forbidden by Allah. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) clarified this point. According to Hadith recorded by Muslim, Allah says:

قال الله تعالى: ((إني جعلت عبادي حنفاء، فاجتالتهم الشياطين وحرمت عليهم ما أحللت لهم، وأمرتهم أن يشركوا بي ما لم أنزل به سلطانا))

"I had created all My servants as monotheist. Satan, however, misled them. What I had declared as lawful he made it unlawful. And people were commanded to take partners with Me, without any authority".

According to the Qur'an:

﴿ سَيَقُولُ ٱلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا۟ لَوْ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ مَآ أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَآ ءَابَآؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَّمْنَا مِن شَىْءٍ ﴾

"Those who take partners with Allah say: 'If Allah had willed, we would not have taken partners with Him, nor would our fathers; and we would not have forbidden anything.'" (Al-Anam, 6:148)

Polytheists were guilty of two crimes: polytheism and forbidding lawful things. Polytheism implies all such worship which is not allowed by Allah. Polytheists too believed that the worship (of false deities) was either obligatory or desirable. Most of them worshipped someone other than Allah in order to gain nearness to Allah. Moreover, they invented a new faith and in accordance with it they used to worship God. An instance in point is Christians who have invented various acts of worship.

Basis of Error

Man is misguided owing to these two things: to follow a faith which is not prescribed by Allah and to forbid things which have not been declared unlawfull by Allah. Imam Ahmad and other religious scholars therefore believe that acts of creatures are of two types: acts of worship considered as faith which benefit one in the Hereafter or both in this life and the Hereafter; and acts of manners which benefit one only in this life. As to the worship, only such acts of worship will be accepted which are prescribed by Allah. As to the acts of manners, only such acts would be forbidden which have been declared so by Allah.

Guided by this principle such innovated religious festivals and fairs are to be avoided in that they have assumed the form of a new faith in the mistaken belief of gaining nearness of Allah.

CHAPTER: INNOVATION

Innovations are always undesirable. This point should be grasped as general rulings and principles of the religion. However, some people tend to categorise innovations under two heads: good and bad. In order to substantiate their claim they refer to this remark of Umar about Taraweeh prayer: "How good this innovation is?" Moreover, they cite various rituals which came to be practised after the Prophet's death, yet they are not considered undesirable; on the contrary, in the light of consensus and reasoning they are regarded as desirable practices. Some ignorant people have introduced many new things and label these as good innovations.

To regard something as a matter of consensus which is widely practised without seeking the opinion of all Muslims and to endorse the same is commented upon thus in the Qur'an:

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ قَالُوا حَسْبُنَا مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا﴾

"And when it is said to them: Come to what Allah has revealed and to the Messenger. They say: Enough for us is that which we found our fathers following" (Al-Maidah, 5:104).

This misconception is fairly common among those who hold a distinct position in society by dint of their learning or devotion to religious practices. They draw on such arguments which are not valid in matters of faith.

There are many explicit statements in the fundamental sources of Islam which condemn innovation and dismiss arguments advanced in support of good innovations. These arguments are either drawn from Shariah or are the disputation of such persons whom only the ignorant people can trust in them.

As to the opponents they may take only the two positions:

Either they should hold that once it is established that some innovations are good and others bad, the bad one is that which has been forbidden by Shariah. As to the innovations about which Shariah is silent, they are not bad but may possibly be good.

Or, they should say that such and such innovations are good in view of such and such advantages. That is, they do not hold the faith that each innovation is error.

Our stance is that it is reported in authentic Hadith:

«شَرُّ الأُمُورِ محدَثَاتُها ، وكُلُّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلالَةٌ»

The worst deeds are innovation. Each innovation is error.

These are unmistakable statements of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) regarding innovations. It is not, therefore, proper for anyone to reject Hadith. One guilty of it is in serious error.

The opponents may, however, argue that if something is endorsed by Shariah, it cannot be regarded as innovation. Given this, a general principle (each innovation is error) will be followed without making any exception. Or a practice of which sanctity is established, would be taken as an exception. And it is well-known that the general principle is always applicable except in its exceptional cases. Otherwise every innovation would be held as an error according to the general ruling.

So those who believe that certain innovations are exceptions, the onus lies on them for producing sound argument in defence of innovations. Otherwise every innovation would be held as an error according to the general rule.

It should be realised that the arguments which exempt something from general principles should be based on Shariah. In other words, these should be drawn from the Qur'an, Sunnah and consensus, whether directly or by implication. The views and practices of certain scholars or certain communities and persons cannot in any way supersede the Prophet's saying.

Claim for Consensus

As to those who believe that practices contrary to Sunnah have gained the consensus of the Muslim community in that the community let them flourish and did not forbid them. It is a fallacious view. For, there have been persons in each period who have opposed and forbidden practices which are contrary to Sunnah. If Muslims carry out certain practices at a single or many places, it cannot be taken as consensus. That some groups practise a particular thing is not a sound argument on this count.

Most of the ulema did not regard the practice and views of the ulema of Madina in the days of Imam Malik (May Allah be pleased with him) as the clinching argument. Rather they preferred Sunnah. We know about their credentials. Given this, we cannot take the practice of certain scholars as the model who do so out of habit or because of compulsion by the general public or out of conformity or under constraint of such ignorant but dominant people who do not possess any knowledge nor do they have abilities of discernment, rather their faith in Allah and His Messenger is itself doubtful. Some scholars are no doubt good people but they seem to follow a common practice without thinking or they have been victims of some confusion.

It can be held that although some of these people are good, and may be graded as religious scholars yet their conduct cannot be taken as model in matters of Shariah. Ulema are not in favour to cite these practices. The bitter truth is that ignorance is rampant. Majority of people are misled by such arguments which have no basis. What is most deplorable is that even those associated with religious know ledge have fallen prey to such a misunderstanding.

Sometimes certain points are adduced by persons of knowledge and faith. Nonetheless their words and deeds do not carry any weight in matters of Shariah. They seem to be misguided in matters which they

have not drawn from Allah and His Messenger. They draw on Shariah argument only in order to silence their audience, although it is not a good practise. For in such a debate only such arguments should be cited which are authentic. It is sheer hypocrisy that they refer to baseless principles, and overstretch them in order to prove their points.

It is not proper to isolate only such innovations as the target of Hadith (each innovation is error), of which prohibition is wellknown. Such a conduct amounts to toying with Hadith. Shariah has already forbidden unbelief, transgression and all misdeeds. Their prohibition is common knowledge. The above quoted Hadith makes no reference to these evils. However, if one were to accept the view that only those things are forbidden which are explicitly forbidden in Shariah, irrespective of the fact whether those were practised in the days of the Prophet or not, it would distort the definition of innovation. In this case both its absence and presence would make no difference. Rather the Prophetic statement: "Each innovation is error" would tend to mean that each practice of Arabs and non-Arabs is error. Obviously it is misinterpretation of the text and may give rise to several problems, some of which are stated below:

1. It makes the Hadith meaningless. For if something has been already forbidden, its prohibition is an established fact. And if its prohibition is not there, it cannot be prohibited under the Hadith (each innovation is error), if the above definition of the Hadith is accepted. In either case the above Hadith appears pointless, whereas the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) used to recite this Hadith in the Friday sermons and it was considered as a comprehensive statement.

2. It would render the expression "innovation" meaningless in that it would be applicable nowhere.

3. Innovation is something general whereas prohibition make it an exception. Both of them are thus relative terms for being specific and general. Given this if a general rule is mentioned whereas the intent is to consider only the exception without spelling it out, concealing what ought to be explained and elucidating only the hidden meaning amounts to fraud. Only an unscrupulous person can commit this, it cannot be expected of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

4. If the Prophet’s statement, "Each innovation is error" and "Avoid inventing new things in matters of faith" stand for things which are explicitly forbidden, it means that he failed to guide Muslims to follow the above quoted Hadith.

5. If the above Hadith is specific to things which are explicitly forbidden, then the number of things which are forbidden is too less than that of those which are not forbidden. As it is, a general statement cannot be made to indicate a very limited number of practices. It will be highly improper to do so.

In the light of above considerations it is clear that the opponents' viewpoint is baseless and cannot be held applicable to the Hadith under discussion. The onus lies on those who try to make certain points. They should prove that their position is in accordance with the intent of Shariah. Likewise, they should tell why they construe this particular Hadith in an exceptional sense while the above accounts make it impossible to regard these as an exception. This was in respect to their first argument.

A rejoinder to their second argument

In so far as their second argument is concerned, it may be countered thus: Let us assume that the innovations are of two types: good and bad. Their assumption does not, however, make it compulsory that Hadith is not a sound argument for condemning all acts of innovations. What can be said, at most, is that if an innovation is proved to be good, it will be treated as an exception. However, the fundamental principle remains intact that each innovation is an error. For in responding to this question we have already brought home the point that if an innovation is proved to be good, it is either not an innovation or is an exception to the general rule. It maintains and safeguards the position of Hadith.

Such a situation arises only when an innovation is proved to contain goodness. However regarding the matters which are considered good but they are not actually so, and also regarding the matters which might be either good or bad; it is improper to advance them as argument. Regarding all of them our stand is that if an innovation is proved to be something good, either it is not an innovation at all or is an exception to the general rule. If its goodness is not proved, it would continue to be governed by the general rule, i.e. each innovation is error. Whatever be the case, the import of Hadith remains sound.

No one is authorised to dismiss the Prophet's statement: "Each innovation is error." It does not befit any one to ignore such a comprehensive and all-embracing statement of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Nor is it possible for anyone to reject its import. As to those who try to tone down the statement holding that each innovation is not error, it is tantamount to rebelling against the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). For if the goodness of an act is proved, it should be held that a particular act is not innovation hence it lies outside the range of the

Hadith. Or it may be considered that the practice is to be considered an exception in view of such and such evidents. The former position is better whereas the latter is subject to question. For the Prophet's intention is clear in Hadith and it is not permissible in any case to overlook his intention.

Taraweeh Prayer

Taraweeh prayer is not an innovation. That it is Sunnah is evident from Prophet's words and deeds. For he said:

«إِنَّ اللهَ فَرَضَ عليكُم صِيَامَ رَمَضَانَ ، وَسَنَنْتُ لكم قِيامَه»

"Allah has made fasting in Ramadan obligatory; and prayer therein is Sunnah."

In the early part of Ramadan the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) led congregational Taraweeh prayer three nights and he repeated the same on the last nights of Ramadan, saying:

«إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ إذا صَلى مَعَ الإِمامِ حَتّى يَنْصَرِفَ كُتِبَ له قِيامُ لَيْلَةٍ»

"When one prays behind Imam and stays till Imam finishe, he gets the reward for praying for the whole night."

The above Hadith is reported by many Muhadditheen; and Imam Ahmad has inferred from the same that it is better to offer Taraweeh prayer in congregation than individually. This Hadith obviously exhorts us to offer Taraweeh prayer in congregation hence it is a clear Sunnah. Moreover, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not object to the Companions praying Taraweeh in congregation. His silence and the continuance of the practice are in themselves a proof that it is Sunnah.

As to Umar's remark about Taraweeh that it is a good innovation, it leaves little room for the opponents to draw a fallacious conclusion. For, if on other occasions a religious command is mentioned with reference to the statement of Umar or any other Companion, the very same persons declare that a Companion’s statement is not a clinching argument. If this is the principle, Umar's statements which

contravenes the Prophet's Sunnah cannot be a clinching argument. Moreover, those who regard a Companion's statement as a sound basis do concede the point that a statement which is contrary to Hadith cannot be reckoned. In any case it is not proper to cite a Companion's statement in opposition to Hadith. This is no doubt true that if a Companion's statement is not objected to by anyone, it may be used for making an exception to the general principle of Hadith. In the light of the above what can be established, at most, is that a particular innovation can be proved good. However, it leaves out other innovations.

We must reiterate the point that Umar branded Taraweeh prayer as good innovation. He, however, used a literal expression, not a Shariah one. It is common knowledge that innovation stands for such acts which are done without any precedence. In Shariah terminology, innovation signifies an act which does not have any basis in Shariah. So, if one practises an act in the light of the Prophet's conduct after his death and follows the same, for example, a practice initiated by Abu Bakr, (issuing a book of charity) it may be literally described as innovation in that it did not have any precedence. Even Islam was described-literally as an innovation. The representatives of the Quraysh at the court of Negus in Ethiopia while opposing the Muslim migrants, said: "They have deviated from the faith of their ancestors nor have they embraced the Emperor's faith. Rather they practise a new faith which is not known to anyone."

However, an act which is endorsed by the Qur'an and Sunnah is not an innovation according to Shariah, though it may be literally considered as innovation. For the literal meaning of innovation is much more wide ranging than its definition in Shariah. Obviously, in the Prophet's statement: "Each innovation is error," innovation is not taken in its literal sense; it does not condemn an act which is done for the first time. For Islam itself and the faiths preached by earlier Messengers were new and unprecedented. On the contrary, the Prophet's reference is to such acts which are not prescribed by

Shariah. As to Taraweeh prayer, the Companions of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) used to offer it in the Prophet's life both collectively and individually. On the third or fourth night while the Companions had assembled, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) told them:

«إنه لَمْ يَمنَعنِي أن أخرُجَ إليكُم : إلا كَرَاهَةَ أن يُفرَضَ عليكُم. فَصَلُّوا فِي بُيوتكم؛ فَإِنَّ أفضَلَ صَلاةِ المَرْءِ فِي بيته إلا المَكْتُوبَةَ»

"I did not deliberately come out for Prayer lest it may become compulsory for you. You should offer it at home. For, except the obligatory prayer the best prayer is the one which is offered at home."

On reflecting over the above report it becomes clear that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) deliberately absented himself lest Taraweeh prayer might become compulsory. Offering prayer was still a duty. Had the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) not apprehended that it would become compulsory, he would have certainly come out. During his caliphate Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) assembled the Muslims to offer Taraweeh prayer in congregation and arranged for light in the mosque. This particular form of prayer i.e., offering it behind Imam and making arrangement for lighting were the practices not followed by the Companions at an earlier date. Hence these were named as innovation. This could be the only literal expression for these practices. However, these practices were not innovation according to Shariah. For such a practice is a virtuous act in the light of Sunnah. It was not practised continuously for the fear it might become compulsory. After the Prophet's death there was no such apprehension hence there was no obstacle to continue this practice on a regular basis.

Acts which are not innovations

There are many acts which cannot be described as innovation, for example, the collection of the Qur'an. The Qur'an was not compiled in the days of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) for the process of the revelation was on and commands were subject to change by Allah. Had the Qur'an been collected in book form then it would have been difficult to incorporate changes. However, after the Prophet's death the process of revelation ended and Shariah was established hence the Qur'an was collected. Technically this act of the collection was an innovation; it was not, however, an innovation in terms of Shariah. On the contrary it was in accordance with the Sunnah.

Same holds true for Umar's expulsion of Jews of Khayber and Christians of Najran from Arab. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had instructed him to do the same while he was on his death bed. Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) could not implement it in view of his preoccupation with the battles against the Persian, Romans and the apostates. As soon as Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) found an opportunity after assuming office, he implemented the Prophet's directive. Once again Umar's acts may be described literally as innovations. Even the Jews had raised the same point in telling Umar: "You expel us while the Prophet had let us stay." In Ali's days they once again made an appeal on the same ground, seeking permission to return, adding that they had a document written in Ali's own hand. However, Ali too, refused them permission. Although Umar's action happened at a date after Prophet's death, it being in consonance with the Prophet's directive cannot be branded as an innovation.

Another instance is of Abu Bakr declaring a war against those who refused to pay Zakah. There are many other instances illustrating the same point. The above account should, however, suffice.

The Underlying Principle

Generally speaking, people invent things, regarding them as useful. If new things are harmful, these would never gain currency.

In the light of this principle let us study the situation which prompts Muslims to consider certain things as useful. If such a situation arose after the Prophet's death and there is no prohibition on the Prophet's part, this practice may be adopted. Likewise, necessity of something was realised in the Prophet's day, yet he did not do it in view of certain hindrance which however removed after his death, then it is legal to be adopted.

Moreover, if their is some issue behind which there is no valid reason or the reason is the product of misdeeds of the people, the it is not proper to adopt it.

If some action was needed in the Prophet's day yet he did not do it, it should be realised that he did not recognise its need. Such an action is, therefore, deprived of any usefulness. But the necessity of some act was realised after the Prophet's death, and the reason behind it is not the result of misdeeds of the people, then this act may consist usefulness.

Two Viewpoints of Jurisprudence

Muslim jurisprudents have two viewpoints on this issue. According to one group, what is not prohibited is permissible, for the latter group, only that is permissible which is commanded. The latter group is sub-divided into two schools of thought: for one only such things are permissible which are borne out by the Prophet's word, deed or affirmation. This group does not recognise the principle of analogy. For others, commands may be sanctioned by the Prophet's word or by its import. They are those who follow the principle of analogy.

Worldly Ulema and Misguided Sufis

If an action was needed in the Prophet's day yet he did not do it, it means that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not recognise its need. To hold such an act as permissible amounts to tampering with the religion of Allah. Only the misguided ruler or audacious ulema and saints could dare do so. Those liable to committing mistakes in interpretation may also be guilty of the same. This statement of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is recorded on the authority of many Companions:

«إنَّ أخوَفَ ما أخَافُ عَلَيكُمْ زِلَّةُ عالِمٍ، أو جِـدالُ مُنـافِقٍ بـالقُرآنِ، وَأئِمَّةٌ مُضِلُّونَ»

"What I fear most regarding you is the mistakes committed by Ulema, the disputation of hypocrites through Qur'an and the misguided leaders."

A Clinching Argument

An instance in this context is Adhan in Eid prayers. This practice was invented by a certain ruler but was resented by the Muslims. They objected to it on the ground that it was an innovation. Otherwise they would have used the pretext that Adhan is a form of remembering of Allah and a call to the Muslims to worship Allah. It could be easily argued that Adhan is derived from the Qur'anic verses which exhort us to remember Allah and to invite others to Allah. The analogy of Adhan in Friday prayer could also be advanced. It is evident that the arguments advanced in favour of Adhan for Eid prayers are stronger then those advanced in favour of other innovations. In spite of this, the Adhan for Eid prayers are still an innovation in that the necessity which needs it today did also exist in the Prophet days and there was nothing to stop it yet the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not follow this practice. He did command to announce Adhan in Friday prayer. However, he offered Eid prayers without Adhan, and Iqama. For both his practices and his abandoning of certain action are Sunnah, his abandoning of Adhan in Eid prayer is Sunnah. Now it is not permissible for anyone to alter his way.

Any tampering on this count may be likened to adding the number of Rakah in the five daily prayers. That is, one offers five rakahs instead of the prescribed four in Dhuhr prayer on the ground that prayer is a virtuous act and offering more rakah is an act of greater virtue.

Likewise, a particular place is designated for remembering Allah and it is paraded as a good innovation. This practice is, however, undesirable for being an innovation. We know well that each innovation is error. We are sure that it would lead to error even before its harm becomes manifest. Had it been a good practice it would have been prescribed or recommended. No matter how hard the practitioners of innovation may try, their efforts cannot be acceptable. For the need for such action existed in the Prophet's day

yet he did not follow or prescribe that practice. His avoidance of this practice is Sunnah and it is a weighty argument against all the points advanced in its defence.

Acts of Innovation

Let us now tum to such acts of innovation which have been invented by people owing to their own misperceptions. An example is the delivering of a sermon before Eid prayer. This innovation was practised by certain rulers which was objected by Muslims. In their defence they argued that since those praying dispersed after the prayers and did not listen to the sermon whereas they used to stay in the Prophet's day. This argument is not valid enough of justify this innovation. For the need for such an action was caused by the same ruler. When the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) used to deliver sermon, his primary concern was the welfare and guidance of Muslims whereas the ruler was interested only in his own glory and power. The ruler's misdeeds could not justify another misdeed. Instead of introducing an innovation the best way for these rulers was to mend their ways and follow Sunnah. Then they would have monitored people's response as to whether they waited for the sermon or not. Had they not waited for the sermon, Allah would have taken them to task for not listening to the sermon.

Innovation and Sunnah

If these fundamental principles are grasped, one would not remain in doubt about innovation. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«مَا أَحْدَثَ قومٌ بِدْعَةً إلا نَزَعَ اللهُ عنهُمْ مِنَ السُّنَّةِ مِثْلَهَا»

"When people introduce an innovation, Allah withdraws from them Sunnah in an equal measure."

As pointed out earlier, Sunnah and Shariah cater to our spiritual needs. If our hearts are full of innovation, it leaves no room for Sunnah. An analogy of this count is that if one's belly is already stuffed with junk food, he can hardly relish quality food.

People are themselves responsible for many innovations. The rulers took to unjust practices, usurped possessions, and prescribed unsuitable penalties for crimes. They did all this in that they had neglected their duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil. Had they implemented Shariah rulings, made no distinction between the rich and the poor in its enforcement, accorded top priority to administering justice, there could hardly be any need for innovation. They would not have needed to impose unjust taxes, harsh penalties, and recruit large armies for their safety and security. They should have better followed the model of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, Umar bin Abd Al Aziz and other just rulers.

Ulema's Negligence of the Qur'an

Had the Ulema followed the Qur’an, gained insight into it, reflected on its guidance which provides useful knowledge and good conduct, established divine wisdom as sent down by Allah to His Messengers they would have possessed such knowledge which would have dominated all other branches of learning. They would have been in a position to discern between truth and falsehood. According to the words of Allah:

"Thus We have made you a just nation, that you be witneses over mankind (Al-Baqrah, 2: 144)."

Muslims would have been the middle community and acted as witnesses unto mankind. They would have been free from all such ills and evils which have been perpetrated by pseudo scholars. They would have been also free from such analogies which are considered to be a part of religion. We are in possession of sound views and sound arguments obtained from the Qur’an and Sunnah. Those who are bestowed with this ability derive guidance whereas others lacking in it fail to do so.

Sufis' error

Had the righteous people followed only such modes of worship which are sanctioned by Shariah, they would have gained true faith as sent down to the Messenger of Allah and they would have reached such heights which would have made them indifferent to innovation. They would not have indulged in their own and fabricated forms of worship and remembrance which bar them from the Qur'an.

No one is to be obeyed: All new and invented forms of worship which are not authorised by Shariah are the result of the error on the part of some religious scholars and rulers. No doubt, they might be excused for these innovations as these may be considered to be the result of their interpretations. However, they should strive to find out the Shariah rulings for all form of worships. Moreover, one may attain the status of a truthful person notwithstanding his error. For, a truthful is not someone who is above and beyond mistakes. He is not someone to be obeyed unquestioningly. Only the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoys this status. [Since the truthful do not hold this status, what can be said about others. It is ironical that their word and deeds are taken as authority in preference to the word of Allah. If one were to present arguments drawn from the Quran and Sunnah to the misguided people, they reject them on the ground that it is not endorsed by a certain saint. They, however, fail to realise that one may not be saint whom they take so. He may be a hypocrite who may have died in the state of disbelief and hypocrisy. Even if it is established that he was a saint, his word or deed does not carry any weight in Shariah. It is a pity that even this self-evident truth is not realised by the misguided people. A leading Muslim leader is on record saying that he prefers the commands of his spiritual leader to those of the Qur'an and Hadith. May Allah pardon him. He did not realise that in saying so he had committed a manifest act of disbelief]

CHAPTER: HARMFUL EFFECTS OF INNOVATIONS

All the invented religious festivals have great harm for faith. Most people fail to perceive their harmful effects. Only persons with insights can realise them. It is, however, obligatory for everyone to follow the Qur'an and Sunnah in that they are free from all harm.

Let us point out some of the harms of innovations. If one assigns a particular day for a particular act, for example, designating the first Thursday in the month of Rajah for fasting and offering prayers on that night, known as Salat al-Raghaib, this innovation has other offshoots as well, such as, preparing feast, putting on one's best dress and indulging in extravagance. In addition, they are prompted by a certain belief. They think that this particular day is superior to other days and that fasting on that particular day would bring them greater reward. Likewise, they take a particular Friday night as superior to other nights in the belief that any worship done on that night would fetch them more reward. In the absence of such belief they are not motivated to do certain acts. For there is always a motivation behind a preference.

Fasting on Friday

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade that particular time or days be exclusively reserved for prayers and fasting. In the Hadith collection of Muslim it is reported on the authority of Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«لاَ تَخُصُّوا لَيلَةَ الجُمُعَةِ بِقِيامٍ مِن بَينَ اللَّيالِي. ولا تَخُصُّوا يَومَ الجُمُعَةِ بِصِيَامٍ مِن بينِ الأيامِ ، إِلا أن يكُونَ فِي صَومٍ يَصُومُه أَحَدُكُمْ»

"Do not reserve Friday night for prayers and day for fast except the Fridays that fall during the period you normally fast in."

According to another Hadith, he said:

«لا يَصُومَنَّ أحدُكُم يومَ الجُمُعَةِ إلا يَوماً قبلَه أو يوماً بَعدَه»

"Nobody should fast especially on Friday except that he fasts on Thursday or Saturday as well."

In the Hadith collection of Al-Bukhari,

عن جويرية بنت الحارث : «أنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ : دَخَلَ عليها يومَ الجُمُعَةِ. وَهِيَ صائِمةٌ. فقَالَ: أَصُمتِ أَمْسِ؟ قَالَت: لا . قَالَ: أَتُرِيدِينَ أن تَصُومِي غَداً ؟ قَالَت: لا. قال فأَفْطِرِي»

"It is reported by Juwairiyah (May Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) visited her on Friday while she was fasting. He asked "Whether she was in fast yesterday." She replied in negative. He asked: "Would you fast tomorrow as well?" When she replied in negative, he asked her to breakfast."

In the Hadith collection of Al-Bukhari and Muslim,

عن محمد بن عباد بن جعفر قال : ((سأَلْتُ جابَر بنَ عبدِاللهِ ، وَهُوَ يَطُوفُ بِالبَيتِ: أَنَهى رَسولُ الله ﷺ عَن صِيَامِ يَومِ الجُمُعَةِ ؟ قال: نَعَمْ ، وَرَبِّ هذا البَيتِ))

"It is recorded on the authority of Muhammad Ibn Ibad that while Jabir Ibn Abdullah was performing Tawaf of Ka'ba I asked him: "Did the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) forbid the fasting specially on Friday." He replied: "Yes! By the Master of this House."

According to another report cited by Al-Bukhari and Muslim which is narrated by Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

((لا يَتَقَدَّمَنَّ أَحَدُكُم رَمضَانَ بصَومِ يومٍ أو يَومَينِ ، إلا أن يكُونَ رَجلٌ كان يصومُ صَوماً فلَيصُمْ ذلك اليومِ))

"Do not fast a day or two days prior to the month of Ramadan except a person who is in the habit of observing a particular fast; he may fast on that day."

Fasting on Particular Days

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) categorised the days with respect to fasting under the following three heads: there are certain days when one is obliged to fast, for example, in the month of Ramadan; or fasting is desirable on such days as of Arafa and tenth Muharram. To the second category belong such days on which he forbade people from fasting as on Friday and the last days in the month of Sha'ban. If one fasts on other days, it is perfectly all right, but if one reserves a particular day for fasting, it is not permissible, whether he does so out of the preference for a particular day or not.

Obviously the reason for forbidding such practice is the belief in reserving a particular day. Had it not been so, there would have been an absolute command of prohibition as the prohibition for fasting on the days of Eid, or of permission as that of fasting on the day of Arafa. There is no wrong in fasting unless a particular day is especially designated for this purpose.

Its Rationale

Since the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) has not accorded a special status to a particular day, it is wrong to do so. Friday is already a special day on which it is desirable to pray, supplicate, remember Allah, recite the Qur'an and use perfumes. It could therefore give rise to the misunderstanding that praying on Friday night would be more rewarding. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), however, put an end to this misunderstanding. Likewise, it is not desirable to fast on the last two days in the month of Sha'ban in the belief of getting special reward or out of excessive caution about the sighting of the new moon. Since Shariah does not admit it as an act of virtue or does not enjoin such extra precaution, fasting on these days is not desirable. The point under study is covered by the same argument. People attach special importance to religious festival and fairs out of their belief in its excellence. We have, however, already brought home the point that if prayer or fasting are performed on a particular day or time in the belief that if would bring more reward, it is a forbidden act.

Means for getting closer to Allah

If someone explains that he regards all days as equal yet he prefers a particular time or day for special acts of worship, then he does so either in conformity to someone or as a matter of habit, or out of fear of reproach or owing to any such factor. Otherwise he is a liar in that his act is prompted by some false belief or extra religious factor. Such a belief, as we noted, is error. For we know well that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), the Companions and religious leaders did not say a single word about the excellence or special importance of that particular time or day for praying and fasting. Such a practice was non-existent in early Islam. These practices came into vogue after the 4th century H. It cannot be therefore argued that such practices have any excellence. Since these were unknown to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), his Companions, the Successors and other leading Muslims of earlier generations, we have no means of ascertaining the special importance of certain time or days for prayer and fasting. The only means to gain closeness of Allah can be learnt from the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), the Companions, the Successors and religious leaders. There is no other way than it.

If it is said that they possessed knowledge about it, then in view of their commitment to the cause of Islam and their concern for the welfare of Muslims, it is unthinkable that they would not have passed on the information to us; or anyone of them did not act accordingly. Any claim for special reward about an act which is not commanded or prescribed by the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) amounts to calling into question his knowledge. Or it indirectly charges him with concealing certain things. In view of the Prophet's devotion to Shariah and his conduct it is impossible that he would have suppressed such knowledge. Given this, the claim for special reward for acts not practised or commanded by the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), is absolutely false and baseless.

Innovation is always accompanied by false belief

An act of innovation is always accompanied by some false belief which leads to error or turns to someone other than Allah. In any case, it is a forbidden act. The same holds true for each and every innovation. It is always accompanied by something which is forbidden or, at least, undesirable. Moreover, such beliefs have an adverse effect on one's spiritual condition. These give rise to false feelings of respect. Such respect is false, having no sanction, whatever, in Islam. If someone says that he does not believe in the excellence of his action of virtue, even then, in taking it as an act of worship, he cannot help remove the feelings of respect for those actions from his heart. And it is well-known that one's belief is the root cause of the feelings of respect and excellence. Thus so doing he damages his belief. Sometimes one regards an act as innovation yet he pays due attention to it in that he is misled by false reports, or he witnesses people following the same practice, some of whom he takes as pious and righteous persons. Or there appears to him some wisdom behind this act of innovation.

Hypocrisy - an offshoot of innovation

The above account makes it plain that all innovations are contrary to the faith practised and preached by Allah's Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Innovations cause hypocrisy, no matter how slight in degree. Practitioners of innovations resemble those who held in esteem Abu Jahl and Abdullah Ibn Ubayy in view of their riches, family background and political authority. When the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) condemned these unbelievers or asked for fighting them, the hypocrites found themselves in a dilemma. On the one hand, they considered obedience to the Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) as essential and on the other, they were not free from their whims and selfish interest. On a little reflection one realises that innovations pose a serious risk to faith. It is, therefore, held that innovation is an offshoot of unbelief.

Affirmation of the exalted position of Shariah

What is said above applies to all forms of worship which do not have any sanction in Shariah, for example, praying near graves and sacrificing near idols. This is a basic principle that the excellence for an act prescribed by the Shariah is to be affirmed while excellence ascribed to an act not sanctioned by Shariah is to be rejected and refuted. Some acts appear virtuous. However, they can be regarded virtuous only if Shariah grants them such a status. Were one to raise the objection that the innovations were circulated and practised by the scholars and the pious and that these have spiritual benefits in that these purge the hearts of the believers and contribute the acceptance of their supplication, the following rejoinder should suffice.

Spiritual benefits in acts of innovations

The above contention may be countered on the ground that those who practise innovations, be they scholars or the general public, may be granted allowance for their piety and reward for only such deeds which are sanctioned by Shariah. As to the acts of innovations performed by them, they can always repent. If they persist in it, they will be held accountable. In so far as the spiritual benefits in acts of innovations are concerned, they are gained simply because such acts are also accompanied by sound Shariah acts, for example, fasting, remembrance of Allah, reciting the Qur'an, and good intention in prayer and supplications. Verily, innovations are tainted by undesirable deeds. These might be, however, overlooked by divine grace. The same point holds true for all such innovations which are said to provide certain benefits.

Nonetheless, it does not free innovations from their prohibition or undesirable aspect. It must be emphasised that innovations are to be shunned and we should rather perform such acts which are prescribed by Shariah and which are totally free from innovations. Gaining certain benefits cannot change an innovation into a desirable act. Not only those who added Adhan to Eid prayers, rather even the Jews and Christians gained benefit from their worship in that part of it is derived from the truthful teachings of the Messengers. Nonetheless, none holds it legal to adopt the worship of unbelievers or cite their reports. The harm in innovations outweighs its benefits. Had it been really good, Shariah would not have ignored it. That an act is innovation itself proves that its evil outweighs its goodness. And this accounts for the prohibition against it.

Judgment of Allah and Messenger

Some people may defend themselves on the ground of personal interpretation in practising certain innovations. It is, nonetheless, binding upon us to expose the true nature of the innovation. Those who consider innovation as a desirable act should not be followed, though they be the leading saints of the day. Although they practise innovations, many scholars of the day regard the very same acts as undesirable and did not practise these. Denial of innovations was by scholars who were no less in degree in terms of position, scholarship and piety. Even if someone considers the latter as inferior, it is a case of divergence of opinion among religious scholars. Given this, the matter should be referred to Allah and His Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). And there is no doubt that Qur'an and Sunnah approve these persons who reject the innovations nor those who consider these as desirable acts. Moreover, classical authorities, who are superior to all following them, figure prominently among those regarding innovation as an undesirable act.

Dire consequences of innovations

The evil flowing from innovation is much more in degree than its benefits. The worst effect of innovation is that as people are drawn to it, they tend to become indifferent to Sunnah. It is for anyone to observe the zeal of the general public in practising innovations while none of it is displayed in discharging their obligatory religious duties. Apart from the general public, even some scholars make a special arrangement for performing innovations. It gives rise to the misunderstanding that they too consider these as the real acts of worship whereas obligatory religious duties are a mere routine matter. This is obviously contrary to the teachings of Islam. As a result, numerous benefits flowing from the performance of obligatory religious duties-divine grace and mercy, purification, sincerity, God-fearingness, acceptance of supplication and real taste of faith-are missing from one's life.

The above account should suffice for the condemnation of innovations. Let us now tum to certain innovations related to festivals and ceremonies.

CHAPTER: SPATIO-TEMPORAL FESTIVALS

Eid (a festival) stands literally for a recurrent event. Thus it implies also a place often visited by people, and the period of time in which a particular act is regularly performed. Likewise, each gathering that assembles regularly belongs to the same category. Innovations falling under all the above categories are found. There are three main types of temporal festivals:

(1) Sanctifying such days which have no sanctity in Shariah. Such a practice was not in vogue in the days of our pious ancestors. There is nothing to accord sacredness to these days such as:

Rajah festivities

The first Thursday and the following Friday night in the month of Rajah are celebrated as 11Al-Raghaib" by the commoners. Islam does not admit the sanctity of this day or night. This practice is reported first after the 4th century H. A Hadith is presented in support of this practice which, according to the consensus of religious scholars, is a fabricated report. It speaks of the sacredness of this particular day and night, stating that one should fast in the day and pray at night. As a matter of fact, praying and fasting especially on this day and night is innovation which is to be forbidden strictly. This particular day and night should be regarded as any other day and night. One should not act in a particular manner on these days to give the impression that these are of some special significance.

Likewise, in the middle of the month of Rajah a particular day is set apart and a specific prayer is offered on that day called as "Salat Umm Dadu." It does not have any Shariah sanction.

(2) To hold a particular day as sacred on which a particular event happened. Yet it does not sanctify that particular day in that similar event had happened on other days also.

Eid Khum Ghadeer

While returning from his farewell pilgrimage the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) delivered a sermon on 18th Dhul Hijja at Khum Ghadeer. He exhorted everyone to abide by the Qur'an, and advised regarding his household, which is reported by Zayd bin Arqam and recorded in the Hadith collection of Muslim. The misguided people have, however, effected certain interpolations into this report. They even claim that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had clearly commanded that Ali be appointed the Caliph and had seated him at an elevated place. The Companions, however, hatched a conspiracy and concealed this command of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Thus, they committed an act of great injustice and transgression.

Such a thing was impossible to do. Had someone tried to conceal this statement, it was not possible for him to do so. Moreover, in view of the Companions' excellent conduct and integrity it cannot be even imagined that they had committed such a monstrous act.

We are not concerned here with the issue of Imamah. Our objection lies in declaring that it is an innovation to regard this particular day as a special day. For it does not have any sanction in Shariah. Our righteous predecessors did not attach any significance to this day. Nor did the Prophet's family members ever consider it as a special day. Special days are only the ones which have been designated so by Shariah. We should therefore better follow Shariah, not indulge in something new and fantastic.

If this particular day is said to have special place in that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) delivered a sermon on that day, he did so on many other days. Likewise, he issued pieces of advice on several occasions. There are days on which important events did happen, for example, the days of the battles of Badr, Hunain, Khandaq and the day of the conquest of Makkah, of Hijra and

of reaching Madina. These highly significant events happened on certain days yet no special significance is attached to these.

Christians are guilty of this practice. They have taken to commemorating the days of special significance in the life of Prophet Jesus (Peace be upon him). The Jews too follow this practice. In Islam, however, Allah has already prescribed certain days for religious festivals. And the days designated so enjoy this position. Only those are to be celebrated. We should not invent new festivals and add these to our religion.

Milad (Birthday)

Same holds true for treating the Prophet's birthday as a sacred day. Muslims do so in imitation of the Christians who celebrate with much pomp and show Jesus's birthday. They do so out of their love and respect for the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Allah would reward them for their love for the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), but not for their innovation. [Once it is established that something is an innovation and yet if one commits it, he would not get any reward, rather he earns Allah's displeasure. Anniversary functions may be held in memory of historic events. They cannot be organised in the belief of earning Allah's reward]

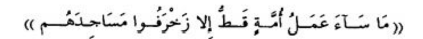
Nonetheless, it should not be celebrated as a holy day. First, there is divergence of opinion about the exact date of his birth. Moreover, early Muslims did not celebrate it as a holy day though they could do so and there was apparently no obstacle to it. Had it been a really good thing, early Muslims would have celebrated it. For they loved the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) more than us and were more virtuous than us. Yet they did not do so.

How to love the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

It is not the proper way to express love for the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) by holding Milad functions. The ideal way is to follow him both inwardly and outwardly. He should be followed, his directives be implemented, his Sunnah be revived, his Message be propagated, and struggle be made by the heart, by the hand and by the tongue in his cause. This was the way of early Muslims, of both Muhajirin and Ansar which was maintained by subsequent generations of pious Muslims.

The Zealous practioners of innovation

Though the zealous practitioners of innovation may attain some reward for their sincerity and good intention, they are not so enthusiastic about following Shariah. Their likeness is that of one who decorates his copy of the Qur'an with gold and silver and does not recite it. Or he recites it but does not put into practice its teachings. Or he is like one who decorates he mosque but does not pray there. Another likeness is that of a person who lights lamps and spreads carpets in mosque yet prays little there. For decorating a mosque is not sought by Shariah. It gives rise to hypocrisy and arrogance. Such matters distract one and make him indifferent to religious duties and result in other problems. The same point is made in Hadith,



"When a community indulges in misdeeds, it takes to decorating mosques."

An Important Point

We should not lose sight of an important point that there are acts that have both evil and good in them. They are good in that a part of them is prescribed by Shariah and are evil in that a part of them is invented. Such acts may be treated as good if its abandoning might lead to forsaking faith itself, as in a case of hypocrites and transgressors. Most of the latter day Muslims suffer from it in that they have taken to such acts.

Guidelines for the Reformer

In these cases, the reformer must follow these two points:

First, he should hold fast both outwardly and inwardly to Sunnah. He should instruct his disciples in the same. He should recognize virtue and practise it. Likewise, he should discern evil and shun it.

Next, he should invite people as much as possible to Sunnah. On observing someone indulging in an undesirable act and if he is stopped from it, he may engage in something worse, or abandon some obligatory act, he should not be asked to give up that undesirable practice. If there is some goodness in his practice of innovation, try to change it by the goodness sanctioned by Shari'ah. Man is instinctively drawn to adopt something and give up another when he is offered an alternative. It is not befitting for anyone to abandon goodness unless he does something better. Both the practitioner of innovation arid those who have forsaken Sunnah are to be condemned in an equal measure. There are many among the critics of innovations who themselves do not follow Sunnah. Many of them are even worse than those who practise innovation.

Religion is based on the twin principles of enjoining good and forbidding evil. Both of them are complementary in that one cannot be established without another. One cannot enjoin good unless he forbids evil. One should ask others to worship Allah and at the same time forbid them from worshipping anyone other than Allah. For the credal statement of Islam is: ''There is no true god but Allah." Man is there to act, not to abandon. While we ask one to abandon doing something, it is done with a view to asking him to do its alternative. Since evil acts shut the door of goodness, it is important that they be given up so that one is in a better position to do good.

Some people may expect to get great reward for celebrating the Prophet's birthday. They may get the same in view of their sincerity

and their love and regard for the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). As already hinted, Allah may accept the deeds of even such people who are not even true believers. Imam Ahmad was once told that a particular ruler had spent one thousand Dinar on the Qur’an. He replied: "Do not stop him, for it is the best thing on which he has spent his money." He said so, notwithstanding the fact that he regarded decorating the Qur'an as an undesirable act. What accounts for the above remark of his is that though the ruler's act was not a good one, it had a hidden virtue. Were the rulers not to spend money in good causes, they were likely to waste it on evil deeds which are shorn of any goodness. If the ruler, instead of decorating the Qur'an, had spent the same amount of money in acts of sports, pleasure, enjoyments, Greek books, it would have been much worse.

A reformer should therefore have insight in the religious wisdom. On observing deeds, he should judge the merits and demerits in them and try to gain a good understanding of the degrees of good and evil so that in case of conflicting position he should give preference to the more important over the lesser one. This is the greatest essence of the Messenger's teachings. It is an outstanding feature of Islamic scholars that in a situation of confrontation they lay emphasis on greater good, reject greater evil and act in accordance with more weighty arguments. [This point should be grasped well by the Ulema of our days who have become negligent towards the principles and pre-requisites of faith. They waste all their energies on peripheral and marginal issues. They emphasise points which are not important in Shariah, for example, the outward appearance of people, criticising Muslims according to their own world-view and thereby putting Muslims on an unnecessary trial]

Three Degrees of Deeds

There are three degrees for deeds: (1) Good act which is prescribed by Shariah and which is desirable at all. (2) Such good acts which contain goodness in that a part of these is derived from Shariah or in view of the sincerity and good intention of the doer. (3) Such an act which is absolutely shorn of goodness in that it either leads to abandoning a good act or for being an evil act in itself.

The first degree is related obviously to following Sunnah both outwardly and inwardly, and verbally and practically. In all matters - academic as well as practical-its knowledge and teaching is obligatory. Sunnah should be prescribed and practised. We have the model of early Muslims-Muhajirin as well as Ansar-and their successors in this respect.

The second degree is observable mostly in the conduct of later Muslims. Deeds of the most of the scholars and commoners belong to this category. They are better than those who do not act good or whose misdeeds are of the type of such evil acts as unbelief, falsehood, cheating and ignorance.

Thus those who practise such rituals of worship, part of which is undesirable, for example, fasting continuously, renouncing natural desire like the monks, spending such night in worship which has got no sanction in Shariah, as the first night in the month of Rajah; such people are obviously better than those who do not have anything good to their credit. Most of those objecting to such new and invented forms of worship are the ones who are themselves utterly neglectful of worshipping Allah. Nor do they obtain good knowledge. They are not inclined to do good acts. They, no doubt, oppose acts which are not prescribed in Shariah yet their own conduct is against Shariah.

A Muslim should adopt all that is good and avoid all that is evil. He should enjoin goodness and forbid evil. So doing he should not care about public criticism, be it by the Ulama or by the hypocrites.

To the third category belong such days which are important in Shariah, for example, the tenth of Muharram, the day of Arafah, the two days of Eid, and the first ten days of Dhul Hijja. These days have no doubt, special importance yet people indulge in innovation on these days and it is important that they be stopped from it.

Tenth of Moharram

As to the innovation on tenth of Muharram, some people remain thirsty in order to express their sorrow, hold gatherings and commit acts which are patently innovations. Allah or His Messenger has not asked or allowed them to do so. Such acts were not performed by the early Muslims or by the Prophet's family members.

It was on this day that Allah granted martyrdom to Hussain (May Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet's grandson, and the leader of the youth in Paradise and his family members. Allah humiliated the transgressors who inflicted this act of injustice. Of course it is a tragic event in the Muslim history. It was rather a calamity. However, it should be treated like any other tragedy. The practitioner of innovations, have, however, invented practices of all sorts. What is worse is that they have added reports slandering the Companions who had nothing to do with this incident.

Fatima, Hussain's daughter, reports it on the authority of his father that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«مَنْ أصِيبَ بِمُصِيبَةٍ فَذَكَرَ مُصِيبَتَهُ ، فَأَحدَثَ لَهَا اسْتِرجَاعاً ، وَإِنْ تَقَادَمَ عَهدُهَا: كَتَبَ اللهُ لَهُ مِنَ الأَجْرِ مِثْلَهَا يَومَ أُصِيبَ»

"If one is faced with some calamity, he should recite: راجعون اليہ وانا لله انا we are from Allah and to Him we should return'. If one recites the same as many times as he is reminded for a suffering, Allah would reward him each time as much as he , did at the time when the calamity struck him" (Imam Ahmad and Ibn Majah). Hussain is the narrator of this report and it is communicated by Fatima who herself was present at Karbala.

To commemorate a certain day or days of mourning is not sanctioned by Islam; such practices were more common in the days of Jahiliyah. By inventing such a practice these people have deprived

themselves of fasting on this particular day, though fasting on this day is in line with Shariah.

On the one hand, the above practices have been invented by some and on the other, their opponents have introduced some further new practices. For example, they take bath, shake hands and spend more money on their household on this particular day. And they cite certain Ahadith in order to indicate their stance. However, such Ahadith are false and fabricated ones.

The differences among Nawasib and Rawafid are well-known. When Nawasib observed that the Rawafid mourn on tenth Muharram, they declared it as a day of celebration out of their spite for Rawafid. Both the groups are equally misguided and false in the innovations. Both of them are in error. Relatively speaking, Shi'ites are more guilty of lies. It does not, however, allow anyone to change Shariah out of one's enmity against evil. The practices of both Nawasib and Rawafid are equally undesirable. Satan intends that we be distracted from the right way. Once he succeeds in his plan, it is immaterial for him which group is joined by the people as both ones are misguided.

The Month of Rajah

Same holds true for the month of Rajah. It is one of the sacred months. As this month approached the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) used to invoke:

«اللهُمَّ بارِك لَنَا في شَهْرَي رَجَبٍ وشَعْبَانَ ، وَبَلِّغْنَا رَمَضَانَ»

"O Lord! Grant us blessing in the month of Rajah and Sha'ban and extend it to Ramadan." There is no other authentic report regarding the superiority of this month. All the reports to this effect are inauthentic.

The Hadith, which is not certainly proved as an authentic one, may be used for the purpose of exhorting others. However, once it is proved that it is a fabricated report, it should not be circulated in any case. If one recounts it, he should specify its nature. For the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«مَنْ رَوى عَنِّي حَدِيثاً ، وَهُوَ يُرَى أَنَّهُ كَذِبٌ ؛ فَهُو أَحَدُ الكَاذِبَين»

"One who reports Hadith on my authority and regards it as inauthentic, he is one of those who tell the lies."

Fifteenth night of Sha'ban

Same applies to the fifteenth night of the month of Sha'ban. According to several reports, it is a blessed night. Some of the pious ancestors link it with special prayers. This is, however, objected by many leading scholars of earlier generations. Nonetheless, most of the scholars are inclined to the view that it is a special night. The same view is held by Imam Ahmad. Yet fasting on this particular day has no sanction in Shariah. Rather, it is undesirable to do so. It is an act of innovation to celebrate it as a special day and to prepare special dishes. Likewise, assembling in mosque at night and offering special prayers are also innovation. Shariah does not sanction that a gathering be held on a particular day with time, number and quantity specified for optional prayers.

Funeral Prayers for all the Muslims

Some people offer a special congregational prayer on the first night of Rajah, which is an undesirable act. I have been told that in some villages people offer a special prayer after Maghrib prayer in the belief that its reward reaches their deceased parents. Some persons are in the habit of offering congregational prayers at night for all the dead Muslims. All these congregational prayers belong to the category of innovation, hence one should avoid these. Obviously it is good to offer additional prayers at appointed hours. It is also permissible to perform additional prayers in congregation. Yet it does not imply that additional prayers be prescribed and performed in the manner one offers obligatory prayers.

Congregation for additional Prayers

One should not lose sight of the point that if gatherings are sometimes held for offering additional prayer, for listening to Qur'an recitation and for the remembrance of Allah, it is a desirable act. For the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did offer congregational additional prayer. It is also on record that while the Companions were engaged in reciting the Qur'an, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) joined them and listened to the recitation. The Companions used to recite the Qur’an whenever they assembled and one of them recited while all others listened. There are several Ahadith regarding those engaged in teaching and reciting the Qur’an and in the remembrance of Allah. For example, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«مَا جَلَسَ قَوْمٌ فِي بَيْتٍ مِنْ بُيُوتِ اللهِ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللهِ ، وَيَتَدارَسُونَهُ بَينَهُم ، إلا غَشِيَتْهُمُ الرَّحْمَةُ وَنَزَلَتْ عَلَيهِمُ السَّكِينَةُ وحَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلاَئِكَةُ . وذَكَرَهُمُ اللهُ فِيمَنْ عِنْدَه»

"Those who recite and teach the Qur'an in mosques, divine mercy overtakes them and they are blessed with tranquility. Angels surround them and Allah mentions them in His court."

Permissible forms of Congregation

It is, however, not desirable to hold congregation at fixed dates or at regular intervals of weeks, months or years. For in this case these tend to resemble obligatory prayers, Jum'a and Eid prayers and Hajj gathering. This distinction should be maintained. It is not proper to take a desirable thing as a matter of hobby and routine. As long as it is not a regular feature, and is held occasionally, it is permissible.

This is the viewpoint of Imam Ahmad and other scholars. In Kitab Al-Adab it is related by Abu Bakr Khalal on the authority of Ishaq Ibn Mansoor that I asked Imam Ahmad: "Is it undesirable if the people assemble and invoke Allah, while raising their hands?" He replied: "It is not blameworthy if they have not gathered together intentionally and do not make it a routine or regular feature."

It is narrated by Marwazi that he asked Imam Ahmad: "Is it alright that people spend the night while one is reciting the Qur'an and others listen to it and keep on supplicating till dawn?" He replied: "I hope there is no harm in it." According to another report, Imam Ahmad said: "What else can be better than it is that people gather together, offer prayers and remind themselves of divine blessings, as it was done by Ansar."

Imam Ahmad alludes in the above replies to the incident narrated by Muhammad Ibn Sirin: before the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) arrived in Madina, the Ansar had mutual consultations regarding fixing a day for talking about the great divine blessing-Islam-bestowed on them. Some of them suggested that Saturday be fixed for it. This was objected to on the ground that the Jews looked upon it as a sacred day and it would be improper to imitate them. Next, Sunday was proposed, but it was associated with the Christians. Eventually they agreed on Friday. All of them assembled at the house of Abu Umamah As'ad bin Zurarah and a goat was slaughtered which sufficed everyone.

Tartusi reports that he asked Imam Ahmad: "If people assemble and the Qari recites in a moving manner which makes them cry in the darkness of the night, is it all right to do so? He replied: "If he recites in the manner of Abu Musa Al-Ashari, there is no harm in it."

It is clear from Imam Ahmad's statements that it is perfectly all right to assemble for supplications. However, it should not be taken as a regular feature.

Imam Ahmad and the places associated with the Messengers

Imam Ahmad holds the same view about the visiting the places which are associated with the Messengers. It is reported by Al Khawatimi that we asked him about a person who visited such places. In reply he said: "Ibn Umm Maktum had requested the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to visit his house, and offer prayers there so that he may pray at the same spot. In view of this Hadith it is not undesirable that one may visit such places. However, the masses have gone to the extreme on this count."

On the authority of Ahmad Ibn Qasim it is reported that Imam Ahmad was asked: "What is your opinion about one who visits Al-Madina or other such places?" He referred to the above quoted Hadith about Ibn Umm Maktum and said: "Ibn Umar used to visit the places which were associated with the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He was once found dropping water at a particular spot. When asked about it he replied that he had seen the Prophet dropping water at that place hence he was following in his footsteps. So, there is no harm in such acts. However, most people have gone to the extreme on this count."

Ibn Masood's Disciples

Many Ulema and religious figures of the ancestors entertain the same reservation. When Abdullah Ibn Masood's disciples made a place exclusive for their congregational worship, Ibn Masood once visited them and warned them severely: "Are you more guided than the Prophet's Companions or have you taken to the path of error?"

What accounts for it is that Allah has already prescribed the obligatory religious duties at appointed times and these are sufficient for His slaves. However, gathering at a fixed time is to resemble rather rival the gathering already prescribed by Allah. Undoubtedly there is much harm in such a practice, some of which have been discussed earlier. However, if an individual performs particular rituals of worship or a group of men occasionally does so, it is an altogether different matter. For in such instances this practice cannot be confused with Sunnah and Shariah.

The Companions' Stance

This explains why the Companions disapproved to fast only in the month of Rajah. And this explains also why Umar felled that tree which people had been visiting in the mistaken belief that it was some blessed tree under which the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had taken the oath of fealty. When Umar found people visiting the place where the Prophet had prayed, as a shrine, he stopped them saying: "Do you want to turn the place associated with the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) into mosques?"

When is the Shariah Ruling changed?

The governing principle is that it is perfectly all right to offer additional prayers either individually or collectively as long as it is not prescribed in the manner of Juma, Eid and obligatory prayers and are not offered at appointed time. Likewise, it is permissible to engage in reciting the Qur'an, supplications and remembrance of Allah individually or collectively and in holy places. However, a different set of rules would be in operation if these are taken as Sunnah itself. The same ruling applies to all desirable acts. These acts turn into innovation if they are treated as an obligatory duty. These issues need further elaboration. However, we would not go into further details. Our aim was to identify some innovations. As to the acts which are already prohibited by Shariah, there is hardly any need to elaborate on them further, such as noise in mosques and intermingling of males and females, too much lighting, putting those praying into inconvenience. That these are to be avoided is common knowledge among Muslims.

CHAPTER: INNOVATIONS ON BLESSED DAYS

Some people are apt to commit acts of innovation on blessed days in both spatio-temporal sense. It makes their act all the more heinous in that they seem to transgress Shariah rules.

An instance in point is the conduct on the day of Arafah. There is no difference of opinion among Muslims regarding its prohibition. Even then the practitioners of innovation do not refrain from this evil. They assemble at the grave of a saint on that particular day and follow exactly the same path which is followed by the pilgrims for reaching Arafat. It is an innovation which is not authorised by Allah. It is man-made ritual which has been set up as a rival to Hajj. Moreover, it tends to taking graves as places of gathering.

Likewise, it is a forbidden thing to travel to Bait al-Maqdis with the intention to stay there as the pilgrims do at Arafat. It is a patent error. It is, of course, desirable to visit Bait al-Maqdis. However, it should be done only for praying and devotional confinement there. For Bait al-Maqdis is one of the three mosques for which it is permissible to undertake a journey. However, it is undesirable to visit it during the Hajj season. For it implies fixing a particular time for visiting it whereas there is no special time for this purpose. Moreover, such a practice confuses it with Hajj and Bait al-Maqdis is set up as the rival to the Ka'ba. Such an act is un-Islamic in that it is not endorsed by Shariah. For many visitors to Bait al-Maqdis circumambulate Sakhara, shave their hairs and perform the very same rituals there which are specific and exclusive to Hajj alone.

Similarly, it is also undesirable to circumambulate the dome of Mount Jabal at Arafat.

Musical Instrument in Eid

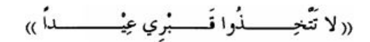
It is undesirable to use musical instruments and wear silken clothes at Eid. It is also not permissible to do so on days other than Eid. Both the practices are equally reprehensibleabandoning Sunnah and practising innovation. Eid should be celebrated in the same manner it was done by earlier Muslims. One should offer Prayer and give charity at Eid al-Fitr and sacrifice animal at Eid al-Adha. Some people lag behind in these acts prescribed by Shariah. They are not alert in reciting Takbeer. Some Imams address the sermons to only the males, excluding females though the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) used to address females as well. [This Sunnah has been abandoned altogether. Females do not come out on Eid and they do not join Juma' and Eid prayers. It is in the face of the Prophet's practice that he took special measures to ensure the presence of women on these occasions. Once while Ayesha was unable to perform, he took her there to watch the congregational prayer. As she did not have clothes, he directed her to borrow these from her sister] Some Imams deliver sermons full of inanities. There are some persons who do not sacrifice animals inside the place of prayer while it is part of Sunnah.

Religion consists in performing all that is prescribed and preaching the same. Included in it also is abandoning all that is forbidden and dissuading others from the same.

CHAPTER: SPATIAL GATHERINGS

There are three types of spatial gatherings: (1) a place which does not have any special status in Shariah. (2) a place which is special yet it is not incumbent on one to visit it for worship. (3) a place where one should worship yet it should not be taken as a place of gathering.

There are Ahadith about all these types of gathering. Somebody had vowed to sacrifice the animal at a particular place, "Bawana". The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) asked him: "Is there any idol or shrine of the polytheists there?" When he replied in the negative, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) directed him to fulfil his vow. We will tum later to this statement of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him):



"Do not make my grave a place of gathering" and to that of Umar: "Do not take places associated with the Messengers as gathering places."

To the first category belong places which do not have any significance in Shariah. Nor do these have anything special about them to treat them differently. These are like any other ordinary places. To visit such a place or to assemble there for prayer, supplication or remembrance of Allah is the manifest error. If such a place has some polytheistic connection, it is all the more vicious to visit such a place. For it is akin to idolatry or a means for the same. The priests used to do the same in that they would visit a place associated with certain idols in the belief that it would bring them closer to God.

Major Deities of Arabia

There were three main deities of Arabia-Lat, Uzza and Manat. A particular town was assigned to each of these three in that there were three major towns in the then Arabia-Makka, Madina and Taif. Lat was associated with Taif. It was said of Lat that he was a pious person who used to offer sattu (grain porridge) to pilgrims. When he died, people took to revering his grave and then made an idol of him. Later on, they erected there a building known as "Bait al-Raba." After the conquest of Makka in 9 AH, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) deputed Mughira bin Shu'ba to raze it to the ground. Uzza was exclusive to the Makkans. This idol was located near Arafat. There was a tree there under which the polytheists would make their offerings and supplicate. After the conquest of Makka, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) sent Khalid Ibn al-Walid there to destroy it. He distributed all the valuables found there. A witch with loose hair came out of the idol as it was demolished. [She must be some fraudulent custodian of the shrine who used to live inside the idol to deceive people]

Manat was the idol for the inhabitants of Madina. It was situated in the valley on the coast between Makka and Madina.

One who wants to find out the nature of polytheism and practices of polytheists, which have been condemned by Allah, with a view to understanding the Qur'anic commands and teachings of Allah and the Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), should study the Prophet's Seerah and the history of then Arabia. In Azraqi's Akhbar Makka and other writings by scholars there is valuable material on this subject.

Dhat Anwat

The polytheists used to revere a tree and would hang their weapons on it. This tree was known as "Dhat Anwat." Some Muslims requested the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to have a tree like that for them. On hearing them he said: "Glory be to Allah! You have uttered what the Jews had told Prophet Moses. 'Have for us a deity like the idolators'. These are the ways of error and you would follow the same error, of which the earlier generations have been guilty."

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) disapproved it in that it resembled a practice of the polytheists. Some Muslims wanted that tree be exclusively marked for them as it was for the polytheists so that they may assemble there and hand their weapons there. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not, however, accede to their request. So a practice which resembles that of the polytheists cannot be even considered.

If anyone visits a particular place in the hope of getting reward, while Shariah does not recommend it so, his act is both innovation and forbidden one. This act can be classified according to degrees, some of which are of the worst kind. Common to all is their evil, no matter whether one visits a mountain or a cave or a river or a tree for this purpose. The same ruling is applicable to all these places.

To light lamps and make vows

Irrespective of the fact regarding the intention, be it for prayer, supplications, reciting the Qur'an, remembering Allah or for any religious duty, it is quite illegal to visit a particular place for reward. What is more illegal is that one makes a vow of lightening a particular place in the belief that it would help him get what he wants. This view is entertained by many misguided people. All Ulema hold that such an offering is forbidden. Same holds true for making vow to feed the fish of a particular river or to give cash money to the custodians of particular place. All these acts betray disobedience to Allah. These custodians resemble the priests who used to live in the temples of Lat, Uzza and Manat. They exploited the commoners and restrained them from following the way of Allah. These custodians resemble the priests to whom the Prophet Ibrahim (Peace be upon him) had told:

﴿ إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِۦ مَا هَٰذِهِ ٱلتَّمَاثِيلُ ٱلَّتِيٓ أَنتُمْ لَهَا عَٰكِفُونَ ﴾

"What are these idols to which you are inclined?" (Al Anbiya, 21:52).

﴿ أَفَرَءَيْتُم مَّا كُنتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ أَنتُمْ وَءَابَآؤُكُمُ ٱلْأَقْدَمُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِّيٓ إِلَّا رَبَّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ ﴾

They said: "Nay, but we found our fathers doing so." He said: "Do you observe that which you have been worshipping, you and your ancient fathers? Verily they are enemies to me, save the Lord of the worlds" (Al Shu'ara, 26:75-77).

To make a vow to give something to the custodians of such places amounts to disobeying Allah. This is of the kind of vow which the unbelievers and idolators make. To perform such a vow is forbidden. One should rather spend that money on charitable works such as construction of mosques or donating it to poor devout Muslims.

Included in it are such places which are supposed to hold graves of some Messenger or pious person or it is believed that some pious person had stayed there whereas it is not so. If it is really such a place, it belongs to the second category.

Fake graves of saints

Numerous are the places which are said to contain graves of saints. But this is not true. For example, it is said that Ubayy Ibn Kaab is buried near the eastern gate of Damascus. This is untrue for all scholars agree on the report that he is buried in Madina, not in Damascus. What is nonetheless certain is that it is not the grave of the Prophet's Companion, Ubayy Ibn Kaab.

Likewise, it is said that the Prophet Hud (Peace be upon him) is buried near a wall of the central mosque in Damascus. There is no authentic report that he died there. There are certain reports to the effect that he died in Yemen while some believe that he is buried in Makka, to which he had migrated after the annihilation of his community. He did not have anything to do with Syria.

It is said that Owais Qarni is buried outside the Western gate of Damascus. This is not a correct report either. There is no proof that he died in Damascus. Even his visit to Syria is not on record. He had travelled from Yemen to Iraq. Some believe that he was killed in Siffin battle while others report that he died in Iran. There are other divergent reports yet no one places him in Syria.

A grave in Syria is said to be that of the Prophet's wife, Umm Salma whereas she never visited Syria. She never travelled after the Prophet's death and she breathed her last in Madina.

Hussain's head

There is a shrine in Cairo which is said to house Hussain's head. This view is dismissed by all scholars. Another place Asqalan is also identified in this context. This is another false report. Some hold that his head was brought from Asqalan to Cairo for burial. Actually his head was taken to Kufa to be presented to Ibn Ziyad. Some believe that it was taken to Syria for inspection by Yazid. This is also untrue. For the Companions referred in this connection belong to Iraq, not to Syria. There are several graves which are associated with renowned figures. However, such reports are not true hence these places do not have any significance. The ignorant men, however, revere these. Even if these happen to be the graves of saints, it does not on any account justify the acts of innovation committed at these fake graves.

The Prophet's Footstep

To the same category belong the places which are said to have the imprint of the Prophet's foot and other relics. There is an imprint in Bait al-Maqdis which is mistaken as the imprint of the Prophet's foot. Some fools even treat it as the imprint of Allah's footstep.

There is a mosque known as "Masjid Qadam" in Damascus containing an imprint believed to be that of Prophet Moses' foot. This is a baseless story in that he never went to Damascus or its vicinity.

To see a saint in a dream

There are certain places associated with the Prophets and saints only on the basis of reports that someone saw a particular Prophet or saint at that particular place in a dream. In Islam a place cannot have any special place on this ground, and it would not be taken as a place of visit or of worship. Such deeds are committed by the people of the Book and in imitating them some ignorant Muslims do the same. Again in taking to the unbelievers' ways some Muslims have started drawing pictures of Messengers and saints. There was a mosque in Damascus known as "Masjid Kaf' which has an impression of a palm which was ascribed to Ali. Allah, however, destroyed it. There are many places in several countries, including Hijaz, to which such reports are ascribed. There is a cave on the right side of the way from Badr to Makka. According to a popular story, it is the same cave in which the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Abu Bakr had taken shelter while they were migrating from Makka to Madina. This is an absolutely false story. This cave is situated in the mount Thaur located near Makka and all the Makkan are familiar with it.

Reverencing inanimate objects

One should not reverence this or other places which have no sanction in Shariah. It is improper to hold a particular place in esteem in that it resembles idolatry. Spacial reverence is more worse than temporal reverence as the reverence for perceptible ones is more nearer to idol worship than that of nonperceptible. Shariah had ensured that anything having even a remote affinity with polytheism be forbidden. It, therefore, prohibits praying near the grave, no matter whether the people hold the grave in esteem or not. This is done with a view to avoiding grave worship.

Places associated with innovation and Masjid Dirar

All these places are, in fact, akin to Masjid Zirar which had been founded on false belief. As a result, the whole structure was demolished. Since this mosque had been built out of spite, and with a view to causing discord among Muslims and in support of the enemies of Allah and His Messenger, Allah asked the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) not to pray there, rather he was directed to demolish it. These false shrines have also been set up as a rival to mosques (the houses of Allah). This is a Satanic scheme to get those revered whom Allah has not enjoined to be revered; get the heads of the creatures bowed down before those who can neither harm nor profit; and dissuade the slaves from the way of Allah. And we know that Allah's way consists in worshipping Him in exactly the same manner which He has prescribed through His Messenger. Another objective is not to accord a special position to these places for assembly. Since people frequently visit these, they turn into places of assembly.

Genuine Graves

Most of the graves of saints are not genuine. Genuine graves are few in number. Some scholars believe that no grave of a messenger exists except that of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Some hold that Prophet Ibrahim's grave is genuine. We have confirmed reports about graves of certain saints. But it is difficult to locate the exact grave. For example, we know that many Companions are buried in Bab al-Sagheer in Damascus but since the place has been overturned many times, their graves cannot be identified exactly. Even if we are sure about the exact location of a particular grave, this does not justify any act of innovation there.

Action without knowledge

Action and worship without knowledge is as undesirable as is action and worship against knowledge. [Action and knowledge are mentioned here in the context of Shariah]

Had reverence for graves been sanctified by Shariah, steps would have been taken to preserve the record of graves. Muslim Ummah whose faith is perfect would have been blessed also with their knowledge about graves.

Generally speaking, custodians of graves circulate fantastic reports about the excellence of graves and shrines in their charge. They earn their bread through these and they unlawfully devour others' earnings. They are guilty also of refraining others from the way of Allah.

Such stories are fairly common that someone asked for something at a grave which was readily granted by Allah or someone made a vow for something and his desire was fulfilled. Idolatry gained currency in the same fashion. Idolators in India make vows at idols and some of their wishes are accomplished by chance which they ascribe to the favour of the idols. Polytheism has gained currency owing to such misunderstandings and misperceptions.

Vow or offering

It is on record that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade making vows. It does one no benefit. Allah only makes a miser spend his money thus. Hence while making vows in legal matters is of no use for any one, what benefit can be derived by making illegal vows at graves in that graves can neither hurt nor profit anyone?

Factors for the acceptance of one's supplication

There are many factors which make one's supplication acceptable. Some times sincerity and humbleness becomes the means of acceptance and sometimes divine mercy makes it possible. Some supplications are granted in that they were preordained. In certain cases supplication can be a trial for the one who is praying. It is common knowledge that some prayers of unbelievers are also accepted. For example, the ones relating to rain, victory and livelihood, notwithstanding the fact that they supplicate to idols directly. Allah says:

﴿ كُلًّا نُّمِدُّ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ وَهَٰٓؤُلَآءِ مِنْ عَطَآءِ رَبِّكَ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَآءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُورًا ﴿٢٠﴾ ﴾

"To each-these as well as those-We bestow from the bounties of your Lord and the bounties of your Lord can never be closed to anyone" (Al-Isra, 17:20).

This is a lengthy issue in that much can be said about the factors leading to the acceptance of one's supplications. We would revert to this point later. What is, however, important is that one must abide by the divine guidance as sent down to the Messengers and one should believe that his success in both the worlds is contingent upon following this guidance.

CHAPTER: NOT TO ERECT SHRINES

Under the second category fall such places which do have something special about them yet it does not warrant that they be taken as shrines or as places for offering prayers and other acts of worship.

Reference is to such places where the graves of the Prophets and saints are located. Such a practice is condemned by the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) both implicitly and explicitly. According to Abu Huraira's report recorded in Abu Daud's collection, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«لا تجعلوا بيوتكم قبوراً ولا تجعلوا قبري عيداً . وصلّوا عليّ.
فإنّ صلاتكم تبلغني حيثما كنتم »

"Do not make your houses graves. Do not take my grave as the place of gathering, rather send blessings on me. Your blessings would reach me, no matter where you are."

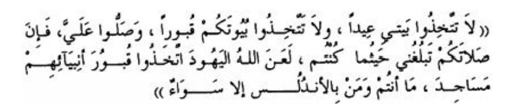
Sending blessings at the Prophet's grave

Some persons have called into question the credentials of one of the narrators of this Hadith. However, the Hadith is authentic in that it is reported by some other reports also. For example, Abul Al-Ala reports on the authority of Zayn al-Abedin that he observed someone visiting and supplicating at a place lying near the Prophet's grave. He forbade him, narrating to him the Hadith which had reached him through his father and grandfather: The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«لاَ تتّخِذُوا قَبْري عِيداً ، ولا بُيوتكم قُبوراً. فإنَّ تَسْلِيمَكُم يبلُغني أينما كُنتُم»

"Do not make my grave a place of gathering and do not make your house as grave. Your blessings on me would be conveyed to me, no matter where you are."

According to the report narrated by Sohail Ibn Ali Suhail, Hasan, Ali's grandson saw him near the Prophet's grave. He invited him to have food which was declined by him. He then asked in surprise about his visiting the Prophet's grave. To this he replied that he had been there to send blessings. He said: "You should better do it when you enter the mosque. For, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:


«لاَ تتّخِذُوا بَيتي عِيداً ، ولاَ تتّخِذُوا بُيوتَكُمْ قُبوراً ، وَصَلُّوا عَلَيَّ، فَإنَّ صَلاتَكُمْ تَبلُغُني حَيْثُما كُنْتُم ، لَعَنَ اللهُ اليَهُودَ اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أنبِيَآئِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ ، مَا أنتُمْ وَمَنْ بالأندُلُسِ إلا سَوَاءٌ»

"Do not make my grave as a place of gathering. You should send blessings on me which would reach me, no matter how far you are. Allah's curse be on the Jews who turned the graves of the Prophets into places of worship."

It is worth noting that even though the Prophet's grave is the most exalted grave on earth, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade people to assemble there. Then, obviously, assembling at all other graves would certainly be more strictly prohibited. Moreover, in the above reports, apart from prohibiting that his grave be turned into a place of gathering, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) asked people not to make their houses as graves. What is meant is that a house turns into grave if prayers, supplications and recitation of the Qur’an are not performed there. He directed that most of the acts of worship be performed at home, not near graves as is the practice of socalled Muslims who follow in the footstep of the unbelievers.

According to Abdullah Ibn Umar, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«اجعَلُوا مِن صَلاتِكُم في بُيوتِكم ولا تتخِذُوها قُبوراً»

"You should offer some of your prayers at home and do not make them as grave."

Abu Huraira's narration recorded in the collection of Muslim, relates that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«لا تَجْعَلُوا بُيوتَكُمْ مَقَابِر. فإنَّ الشَّيطَانَ يَفِرُّ مِنَ البَيتِ
الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ سُورَةَ البَقَرةِ تُقْرَأُ فِيه»

"Do not make your houses as graves." Satan flees from a house in which Surah Al-Baqarah is recited."

Apart from this prohibition the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) directed that blessings be sent upon him which would reach him, inspite of the distance. In another report the same point is made that one's blessings would be conveyed to him, no matter

where one is. Hence his grave is not to be turned into a shrine to be visited frequently and by a large number of people.

Our blessings on the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) are conveyed to him. This point is made in several Hadith. On the authority of Abu Hurairah it is reported by Abu Daud that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«مَا مِن أَحَدٍ يُسَلِّمُ عَلَيَّ إلا رَدَّ اللهُ عَلي رُوحِي، حَتّى أَرُدَّ عَليه السَّلاَمَ ﷺ»

"Whoever greets me, his greetings would be conveyed to my soul and I would return his greeting."

Abu Daud has recorded also this report by Aws Ibn Aws that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«أَكثِرُوا مِنَ الصَّلاَةِ عَليَّ يومَ الجُمُعَةِ وَلَيلَةَ الجُمُعَةِ ، فَإِنَّ صَلاَتَكُمْ مَعرُوضَةٌ عَلَيَّ ، قَالُوا: يارَسُولَ اللهِ ، كَيفَ تُعرَضُ صَلاَتُنَا عَلَيكَ وقَد أَرِمْتَ؟ فَقَالَ:
إن اللهَ حَرَّمَ عَلَى الأَرْضِ أن تَأكُلَ لُحُومَ الأَنْبِيَاءِ»

"Send more blessings on me on Friday night and day in that it would be presented before me." The Companions asked how will our blessings be presented to you while you are dead. He replied: "Allah has forbidden the earth from consuming the body of His Messengers."

It is reported by Abu Hurairah that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«مَن صَلَى عَليَّ سَمِعْتُهُ . وَمَن صَلَى عَليَّ نَائِيا بُلِّغْتُهُ»

"Whoever sends blessings on me near my grave, I would, hear it and one who sends it from far, it would be conveyed to me."

Nasai reports that he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

"Allah would depute angels at my grave who would convey to me the greetings of my Ummah."

Zain al-Abideen Ibn Husain, the most exalted Successor among the Prophet's household, as we noted in the above-quoted report, prohibited one from going near the Prophet's grave for sending blessings upon him. It appears from the above reports that going near it amounts to taking it as a place of gathering. Since the above report had reached Zain al-Abideen from his father and grandfather, he grasped well its meaning.

Hasan, the leader of the Prophet's household, disapproved that one visit the Prophet's grave with the sole intention of sending blessings on him. For this, in his opinion, amounted to taking it as a place of gathering. It establishes how this Sunnah originated from the inhabitants of Madina and members of the Prophet's family, who were close to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). They appreciated well Sunnah, they needed it most and they preserved it most as well. The expression "Eid" used in the Prophet's hadith stands for a place where people assemble intentionally, especially for the purpose of worshipping. For example, Allah has assigned the Sacred Mosque, Mina, Muzdalifah and Arafat as places where people assemble for supplication, worship and remembering Allah repeatedly. The polytheists too, had designated certain places for this purpose. However, with the advent of Islam, these places lost all their sanctity.

Saint's graves

Same holds true for graves of Messengers and saints, be they genuine or fake. Rather, this ruling applies to graves of all Muslims. Sunnah, no doubt, prescribes that one should respect a Muslim's grave in that it is the house of the dead Muslim. Hence one should not throw rubbish there nor should it be trampled upon. According to Ulema, one should not sit while reclining on graves. Likewise, one should avoid doing or saying anything bad near graves. It is desirable that one should send blessings on the dead when one visits graves and pray for them. One's status determines the degree of obligation.

Supplication for the dead

It is narrated by Buraydah that,

«كَانَ رَسُولُ اللهِ ﷺ يُعَلِّمُهُم إِذا خَرَجُوا إِلى المَقَابِرِ: أن يَقُولَ قائِلُهُم: السَّلَامُ عَلى أهلِ الدِّيارِ – وَفِي لَفْظٍ: السَّلامُ عَلَيكُمْ أَهْلَ الدِّيارِ – مِنَ المُؤمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ ، وإِنَّا إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ بِكُمْ لاحِقُونَ ، نَسْأَلُ اللهَ لَنَا ولَكُمُ العَافِيَةَ»

"When Companions went to graveyard, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) directed them to make this supplication: Greeting be upon the believing and Muslim inhabitants of this place. We would meet you soon if Allah wills. We seek peace for us and for you." (Muslim).

Abu Hurairah reports that,

"When the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) went to a graveyard he said:

«أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللهِ ﷺ خَرَجَ إِلَى الْمَقْبُرَةِ فَقَالَ: السَّلَامُ عَلَيكُمْ دارَ قَومٍ مُؤمِنِينَ،وَإِنَّا إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ بكم لَاحِقُون»

"O believers! Greetings be upon you. We will soon meet you if Allah wills."

In a detailed report by Ayesha it is stated that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِنَّ جِبْرِيلَ أَتَانِي. فَقَالَ : إِن رَبَّكَ يَأْمُرُكَ أن تَأْتِيَ أَهْلَ البَقِيعِ ، فَتَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ ، قَالَتْ: قُلْتُ: كيفَ أقولُ يارَسُولَ اللهِ ؟ قَالَ قُولي : السَّلام عَلى أهْل الدِّيَارِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ والْمُسْلِمِينَ ، وَيَرْحَمُ اللهُ الْمُسْتَقْدِمِينَ مِنَّا وَالْمُسْتَأخِرِينَ ، وإِنَّا إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ بِكُمْ لَاحِقُونَ»

"Jibrail has informed me that my Lord wants me to visit the Baqee' graveyard and pray for the forgiveness of the dead." Ayesha asked him how one should supplicate for the dead. He taught her this supplication: "O Believers and Muslims! Peace be upon you! May Allah have mercy on those who have preceded us and those who would follow us. We would meet you when Allah wills" (Muslim).

In the Hadith collection of Ibn Majah is cited this report on the authority of Ayesha that "The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was absent from his room one night. When I looked for him, he was in alBaqee' graveyard, making this supplication".

«فقدته فإذا هو بالبقيع: فقال: السلام عليكم دار قوم مؤمنين ، أنتم لنا فرط ، ونحن بكم لاحقون ، اللهم لا تحرمنا أجرهم ولا تفتنا بعدهم»

"Peace be upon you O Muslims! May Allah have mercy on you and those who follow you. We shall Insha Allah join you. May Allah not deprive us of reward and not put us to some trial."

According to Ibn Abbas, on observing the graveyard in Madina the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«مرّ النبي ﷺ بقبور المدينة. فأقبل عليهم بوجهه ، فقال: السلام عليكم يا أهل القبور. يغفر الله لنا ولكم. أنتم سلفنا ونحن بالأثر»

"Peace be upon you, O inhabitants of graves! May Allah forgive you and us. You preceded us and we are to follow you" (Tirmidhi).

It is learnt from Hadith that he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) offered funeral prayer for Uhud martyrs after eight years of the battle.. It is related by Abu Daud on the authority of Uthman that after burying the dead, Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) faced the grave and directed his Companions:

«كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ إذَا فَرَغَ مِن دَفْنِ الْمَيِّتِ وَقَفَ عليه ، وقَالَ: آسْتَغْفِرُوا
لأخِيكُمْ، وَسَلُوا لهُ التَّثبِيتَ ، فإنَّهُ الآنَ يُسْأَلُ»

"Seek forgiveness and steadfastness for your brother in that he is about to be questioned."

This was the Prophet's conduct which he directed his Ummah to follow. Whenever he buried the dead or visited graves or passed that way, he would do the same. He would greet them as he did to the living ones. Moreover, it constitutes a supplication for the dead in the same manner one offers supplication for the living beings. While praying for the dead one prays for himself and for all the Muslims. This again was the practice of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and of the early Muslims. This practice is prescribed by Shari'ah hence his Companions followed the same on visiting the Prophet's grave.

It is related by Ibn Batta that someone asked Nafey whether Abdullah Ibn Umar greeted at the Prophet's grave. He replied in affirmative adding that he had seen him doing it many times. And he used to say: "Peace be upon the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), on Abu Bakr and on my father Umar." And then he would retire. The same report appears in Imam Malik's hadith collection.

Visiting Graves

Visiting graves is, in principle, permissible, including even the graves of the unbelievers. In the collection of Muslim it is narrated by Abu Hurairah that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«اسْتَأْذَنْتُ رَبِّي أن أسْتَغْفِرَ لأُمِّي، فَلَمْ يَأْذَنْ لِي، وَاسْتَأْذَنْتُهُ أن أزُورَ قَبْرَهَا فأَذِنَ لِي»

"I asked Allah's permission to pray for the forgiveness of my mother which was turned down. I was, however, allowed to visit her grave."

It is also reported in Saheeh Muslim that,

«زَارَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ قَبْرَ أُمِّهِ ، فَبَكَى وَأَبْكَى مَنْ حَوْلَهُ. فَقَالَ: اسْتَأْذَنْتُ رَبِّي أن أَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهَا ، فَلَم يَأْذَنْ لِي ، وَاسْتَأْذَنْتُهُ فِي أَنْ أَزُورَ قَبْرهَا فَأَذِنَ لِي. فَزُورُوا القُبُور ، فَإِنَّهَا تُذَكِّرُ المَوتَ»

"When the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) visited the grave of his mother, he cried so profusely that it moved others to tears. Then he said, "I sought Allah's permission to pray for her forgiveness which was refused. But visit of graves has been permitted. Hence visit graves in that it reminds one of death."

It is reported on the authority of Buraidah in Saheeh Muslim that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«كُنْتُ نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَن زِيَارَةِ القُبُور فَزُورُوهَا»

"I had prohibited you from visiting graves. Now onwards you may, however, visit these."

"According to the report quoted by Ahmad and Nas'ai he said:

«.فَمَنْ أَرَادَ أن يَزُورَ فَلْيَزُرْ ، وَلاَ تَقُولُوا هُجْراً»

"One is free to visit graves. Now onwards you may visit these, for it would remind you of the Hereafter."

Visiting an unbelievers' grave

It is clear from the above Hadith that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) allowed visiting graves, though he had initially prohibited it. He did so on the ground that this visit reminds one of death and of the Hereafter. His permission is in an absolute sense and Muslims may visit graves of both Muslims and non-Muslims.

The purpose served by visiting grave may be had whether one visits the grave of a Muslim or non-Muslim. It is, therefore, permissible. Of course, forgiveness may be sought only for a Muslim, as is the Prophet's Sunnah. Only a Muslim is entitled to it. A reminder of death may be, however, had from the grave of a non-Muslim also.

Undertaking a journey for visiting graves

Ulema are in disagreement on the point whether it is permissible to undertake a journey for visiting the grave. For a group of Ulema it is not permissible, rather it constitutes a sin in that such a journey falls in the category of innovation. None of the early Muslims undertook such a journey. According to Hadith cited in Al-Bukhari and Muslim, one may undertake a journey of only three places, the Ka'aba, the Prophet's mosque and Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. This directive is general and applies to all journeys whether for visiting a mosque or a tomb or any other place for seeking Allah's pleasure. In order to substantiate their view these Ulema cite the following report. When Abi Basrah saw Abu Hurairah returning from the Mount Tur, the place where Allah had spoken to Prophet Moses (Peace be upon him), he said: "Had I seen you before going there, you would not have undertaken this journey. For the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«لا تُشَدُّ الرِّحَالُ إلا إلى ثلاثَــةِ مَسَاجِدَ : الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ، وَالْمَسْجِدِ الأقصى، وَمَسجِــــدِي هــذَا»

"A journey can be undertaken for visiting only three mosques."

On the basis of the above Hadith he concluded that the Mount Tur and other such spots belong to the category of the places for which one cannot undertake a journey. Same holds true for undertaking a journey for visiting a mosque other than the three specified in Hadith.

In the opinion of another group of Ulema such a journey is permissible. This view is held by Al-Ghazzali and other scholars of the later period. This view, to the best of my knowledge, is not shared by any classical scholar. For them it is not an absolute directive and such a journey is not covered by it, for a journey undertaken for

visiting one's parents, Ulema and friends or for other permissible worldly matters is perfectly all right. All scholars are, however, unanimous in their view that the acts of innovation committed at graves are unlawful.

Mosques at graves

It is absolutely forbidden to pray near graves, regard graves as mosques or erect mosques at graves. The above acts are categorically prohibited by the Qur’an and Sunnah.

All scholars forbid that mosques be built at graves. Hanbali, Maliki and Shafi'i Ulema brand it as an unlawful act while others regard it as an undesirable act. It is, however, beyond doubt that such an act is forbidden. For there is Hadith in the collection of Muslim on the authority of Jandab Ibn Abdullah:

سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللهِ ﷺ قَبلَ أنْ يمُوتَ بخَمْسٍ وَهُوَ يَقُولُ «ألا وإنَّ مَنْ كَانَ قَبلَكُمْ كَانُوا يَتَّخِذُونَ قُبُورَ أنبيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ. ألاَ فَلاَ تَتَّخِذُوا القُبُورَ مَسَاجِدَ ، إنِّي أنهَاكُمْ عَنْ ذلِكَ»

"I heard the Prophet (Peace be upon him) saying five days before his death: 'O People! Earlier communities used to tum the graves of their Messengers into mosques. I warn you never to tum graves into mosques. I strictly forbid you from doing it'"

It is reported by Ayesha and Ibn Abbas that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

«لَمْ نَزَلْ برَسُولِ اللهِ ﷺ طَفِقَ يَطرَحُ خَمِيصَةً لَهُ عَلى وَجْهِهِ. فَإذا اغتَمَّ بهَا كَشَفَهَا ، فقالَ ، وَهُوَ كذلك : لعنةُ اللهِ عَلَى اليَهُودِ والنّصَارَى آتخذُوا قُبُورَ أنْبيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ ، يُحَذِّرُ مَا صَنَعُوا»

"While he was on his death bed and suffering from pain, kept on saying: The Jews and the Christians were cursed by Allah in that they took the graves of their Messengers as places of worship."

"By narrating this Hadith, both the narrators would comment that thus he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) eloquently

warned the Muslims not to imitate the Christians and the Jews (AlBukhari and Muslim).

According to Abu Hurairah, the Prophet said:

«قَاتَلَ اللهُ الْيَهُودَ والنَّصَارى : اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَآئِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ »

"Allah's curse be on the Jews and the Christians who took the graves of their Messengers as places of worship" (AlBukhari and Muslim).

Till his last day the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) kept on prohibiting the Muslims from turning a grave into mosque. Significantly enough, he cursed those guilty of it in order to warn his Ummah very clearly. According to Ayesha,

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ ﷺ فِي مَرَضِهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يقُمْ مِنْهُ « لَعَنَ اللهُ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارى اتَّخَذُوا قُبُور أَنْبِيَآئِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ, وَلَولاَ ذِلكَ لأُبرِز قَبْرُهُ غَيرَ أَنَّهُ خُشِيَ أن يُتَّخَذَ مَسْجِداً »

"The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) while he was on his death bed said: 'Allah's curse be on the Jews and the Christians, for they took the graves of their Messengers as places of their worship.' After recounting it she adds: "Had it not been the case, the Prophet's grave would have been at an open place. However, there was an apprehension that his grave might be taken as a mosque" (Al Bukhari and Muslim).

On the authority of Ibn Abbas it is recounted by Imam Ahmad, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi and Nasai that,

«لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللهِ ﷺ زَآئِرَاتِ الْقُبُورِ وَالْمُتَّخِذِينَ عَلَيهَا الْمَسَاجِدَ وَالسُّرُجَ»

"The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) has cursed the women visiting graves, those who tum graves into mosque and those who light lamps at graves."

In sum, there are numerous Ahadith to this effect. Obviously all of these cannot be reproduced here.

So the mosques erected at the graves of Prophets, saints and kings are unlawful. All Ulema are of the view that it is undesirable to pray in such mosques. For Hanbalis a prayer offered in such mosque is not acceptable in view of the Prophet's prohibition and curse.

The matter becomes all the more serious if such a mosque is built at unlawful land. For example, some mosques have been built at the graves of some saints by usurping land or a madrasah has been converted for this purpose. Such an act violates many rules, as for example, (1) the land of a graveyard cannot be used for any other purpose than to bury the dead bodies. Moreover, a mosque cannot be built on a public thoroughfare; (2) for erecting such buildings, the graves of other Muslims are dug and taken out from there as has been observed at many places; (3) there is a report by Jabir in Sahih Muslim that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) has prohibited erection of buildings at graves; (4) public toilets are appended to such buildings whereas the graves of Muslims should be away from impurity; (5) such practices amount to taking graves as mosques which is a forbidden act, as pointed out earlier; (6) lamps are lighted at graves whereas the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) has cursed those guilty of it; (7) such a practice betrays an imitation of the ways and rituals of the People of the Book, [It is strange that the religious scholars take a strong exception to wearing a dress resembling that of the unbelievers. However, they do not object to these practices which also amount to following the ways of the unbelievers. What accounts possibly for it is that some of the religious scholars earn their bread through such acts] etc.

CHAPTER: PRAYING NEAR A GRAVE

It is not permissible to pray near a mosque erected at a grave, for this too, amounts to taking the grave as a mosque; this point is drawn from Ayesha's statement: "Had it not been feared that the Prophet's grave would be turned into a mosque, it would have been located in an open space." What Ayesha meant was not that a mosque could be erected there. It was simply unthinkable. The Companions would have never done so. It was, however, apprehended that people would start praying there.

To select a place for offering prayers signifies that it is taken as mosque. Wherever one prays, it is mosque, no matter whether a structure is there or not. For the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«جُعِلَتْ لِيَ الأَرْضُ مَسْجِداً وَطَهُوراً»

"The whole earth has been made pure and a mosque for me."

It is reported by Abu Saeed Khudri that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«الأَرْضُ كُلُّهَا مَسْجِدٌ إِلا الْمَقْبَرَةَ وَالْحَمَّامَ»

"All the earth, except graves and toilets, is mosque" (Ahmed, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Bazzar).

Some jurisprudents hold that it is undesirable to pray in a tomb lest one may be afflicted by impurity. For the dead body turns into clay hence a distinction is drawn between a fresh and old grave. It is said that it is all right to pray at a fresh grave whereas it is not permissible at an old grave.

The above view is downright fallacious. It is not permissible to pray at a place with impurity, whether it is a grave or any other place. Actually the Prophet's prohibition is not on this count. Rather, he categorically said that the Jews and the Christians used to tum the graves of their Messengers into places of worship and he cursed them for it. He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) also said:

«اللهُمَّ لاَ تَجْعَلْ قَبْرِي وَثَناً يُعبَدُ ، آشْتَدَّ غَضَبُ اللهِ عَلى قَومٍ آتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ»

"O Allah! Let not my grave tum into an idol to be worshipped." Allah's displeasure would befall those who have turned the graves of their Messengers into mosques."

The earlier communities were guilty of it. He warned Muslims against it and strictly forbade it.

In view of several Ahadith of this import it is evident that prohibition does not stem from the fear of impurity. Rather, it proceeds from the apprehension that the grave be turned into an idol. Imam Shafi'i says: "I consider it undesirable that someone be revered so much that his grave be turned into a mosque. There is a trial in it for such person and for the later generations". As it is, it was out of the question that the Prophet's grave would be dug out and soil inside would turn upside. Nonetheless, he said regarding his own grave: "O Allah! Let not my grave tum into an idol to be worshipped. The Jews and the Christians took such graves as mosques which were free from all impurity. Yet they have been cursed for the very act of taking grave as a mosque. Moreover,

«لاَ تُصَلُّوا إِلى القُبُورِ ، وَلاَ تَجْلِسُوا عَلَيهَا»

"The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) asked not to pray facing grave nor to sit on these" (Muslim).

About People of the Book he informed,

«كَانُوا إِذَا مَاتَ فِيهِمُ الرَّجُلُ الصَّالِحُ بَنَوا عَلَى قَبْرِهِ مَسْجِداً ، وَصَوَّرُوا فِيهِ تِلْكَ التَّصَاوِيرَ . أُولَئِكَ شِرَارُ الْخَلْقِ عِنْدَ اللهِ يَومَ الْقِيَامَةِ»

"When a pious person among them died they would erect the 1nosque at his grave, draw pictures therein. Such people will be the worst creatures on the Day of Judgement."

How idolatry started

We are told that Lat's worship started with the reverence of his grave. Likewise, it is related that Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Yauq and Nasr were the pious persons in the interregnum between the Prophets Adam and Noah (Peace be upon them). People followed these pious persons. And when they died, their disciples decided to draw their pictures, which they thought, would inspire them to offer more worship in that they would be encouraged by their pictures. They did the same. The following generations thought that their ancestors used to worship the pictures and invoked their blessings for rain. Thus, they turned these into idols and polytheism ensued. The Arabs too took to worshipping them" (Tabari).

This explains why the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade this act. For it has led many communities to indulge in polytheistic practices, both major and minor. Many took the saints as idols. Some took the stars as idols and started worshipping these.

To indulge in polytheism in respect of someone' s grave, whom one reverences, is much more serious than worshipping an idol made of wood or stone. It explains why people are found crying out their hearts while standing before graves. They appear as sincere worshippers. Such sincerity is not to be seen while they are in mosque. Many are guilty of even prostrating before graves, considering the praying near a grave a more blessed act than praying even in the three exalted mosques for which it is permissible to undertake a journey.

This is the very evil that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) struck at the root of it by prohibiting the offering of prayer at a grave, even though the prayer offerer prays there in normal course and does not regard his praying therein a more blessed act. This prohibition is akin to the prohibition to pray at sunrise, sunset and high noon. For the polytheists used to worship the sun at these

hours. The Prophet's prohibition aims at preventing even the slightest means to polytheistic practices. When one deliberately prays near the grave of the Messenger or a saint, considering it as a blessed act, he opposes Allah and His Messenger and invents a faith which is not sanctioned by Allah. For Muslims have been told in clear terms that they should not pray near a grave, no matter whose grave it is. Shariah does not approve it. And there is no merit in it. On the contrary, it is full of evil.

Excesses

It is likely that this particular place may be blessed by the angels' visit and divine mercy. It may have an exalted status. However, Islam has identified what amounts to excess. The Christians have been guilty of excessive veneration of their Messenger in that they took to worshipping him. The Jews committed excess at the other end of the scale in that they killed their Messengers. However, Muslims, the middle nation, follows the middle path, which is free from excesses of both the Jews and the Christians. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«لا تُطْرُوني كَمَا أَطْرَتِ النَّصَارى عِيْسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ . وَإِنَّمَا أنا عَبْدٌ ، فَقُولُوا : عَبْدُ اللهِ وَرَسُولُهُ»

"Do not extol me so much as the Christians did in the case of Jesus. I am just a servant of Allah. You should speak of me as Muhammad, Allah's servant and His Messenger."

If it is held that praying at this particular place is more rewarding than at another, even then one should avoid it. For the harm caused by it is more than the benefits derived from it. Rather, the harm dispels all blessings and might incur divine penalty. One not gifted with the ability to realise the evil consequences of this practice should better follow the Prophet's model. Had there not been any harm in praying at this particular place, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would not have prohibited it. Even wine has certain benefits. Since its harm outweighs its benefits, it has been forbidden. It is not proper for a Muslim to ask the Messenger to advance arguments for benefits and harm of a particular command. His role consists in obeying him. Allah says:

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ﴾

"We sent no Messenger but to be obeyed by Allah's command" (Al-Nisa, 4:64).

﴿مَّن يُطِعِ ٱلرَّسُولَ فَقَدۡ أَطَاعَ ٱللَّهَۖ﴾

"One who obeys the Messenger obeys Allah" (Al-Nisa, 4:80).

Rights due to the Messengers and Saints

In so far as regards and love are concerned, the Messengers owe a greater right than one's own self, property and family. It is obligatory on one to obey them and follow them. Those who discharge these duties to them can never worship them or take them as partners to Allah. Likewise, one owes certain rights to the pious persons, of which details are found in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Nonetheless, their reverence up to the extent of worship is never lawful.

CHAPTER: SUPPLICATION

There are two possible forms of supplication at graves or at other places.

One may by chance make supplication at a place. For example, one is going somewhere and on the way he feels an urge to make a supplication and does so. Or he passed by some graves or deliberately visited these, greeted the dead in accordance with Sunnah and prayed for one's own forgiveness and for them, it is a permissible form of supplication.

Another possibility is that one deliberately visits a grave with the intention to supplicate there in the belief that his supplication is likely to be accepted there, it is a prohibited form of supplication.

Supplication in Church

There is a tremendous difference between the two forms. This point may be illustrated further with this example. Someone is supplicating on his way and passing- by an idol or a church. Since his intention did not originate due to these things, he is not a sinner and his supplication is perfectly all right. Or he is praying at a place where there is a cross, of which he is ignorant. Or he is forced into staying in a Church and supplicates to Allah, there is no harm in it. For he did not visit the Church, in particular, for offering supplication. However, if he visits a particular idol or cross for supplication, it amounts to committing a serious sin. Likewise, if he considers that supplicating in a particular house, market, shop or near a particular pillar is better, it is also forbidden. For one should not take a place exclusively for this purpose. Same applies to praying near graves. Rather, it is a much more serious matter in that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) has specifically forbidden that graves be turned into places of worship and that one pray near these, though he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not single out a particular place in this connection.

As to the popular saying that if one is at a loss about certain thing, he should seek help from the dead in the opinion of all Ulema it is a patently fabricated hadith, constituting a slander against the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

Supplications near graves

The following points should be grasped regarding the issue of praying near graves:

(1) The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade praying near graves in that it would lead to polytheistic practices. It had been done with a view to avoiding grave worship. So if someone in distress prays near a grave and asks the dead to help him, it is a much more serious matter than that of one who prays there in a normal state. For the former is prone to falling into some evil whereas the latter may not be so easily misled. Thus if Shariah has forbidden the latter to pray near graves only in apprehension of the slightest possibility of falling into error, the prohibition in case of the former would, obviously, be much more serious. This point must be readily observable to anyone who has insights into Islam. For Islam demands of all Muslims total surrender and pure monotheism. It allows no room for even the slightest form of polytheism.

(2) To visit graves in the belief that one's supplication is more likely to be accepted there than elsewhere is a deed and belief which is not endorsed by Allah and His Messenger. Nor was such a view held by the Companions, successors and the leading early Muslims. Such a practice was not followed by the pious and Ulema of earlier generations. The earliest report of this practice is found after the second century Hijrah.

The Prophet's Companions were afflicted several times by famine and other major crises yet they never turned to the Prophet's grave. When famine struck in the days of Umar, he went to an open field alongwith Abbas and supplicated to Allah with his intercession. Although the Prophet's grave was situated close to him, he did not pray there.

It is reported about Ayesha (May Allah be pleased with her) that she opened a part of the Prophet's grave during a famine. For rain being Allah's mercy should descend on the Prophet's grave. Ayesha did not invoke the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), standing near the grave for rain.

For this reason when the Prophet's cell was reconstructed in the days of Successors a ventilator was built there so that the grave be open to the sky, and it survives to this day. Numerous other changes happened there. After 650 C.E., there was fire which overtook both the mosque and the pulpit. A tomb was constructed a few years after it, which was disapproved by the public.

Prophet Daniel's dead body

In Maghazi Muhammad Ibn Ishaq reports on the authority of Abu Al-Aliya that when the Muslims conquered the town of Tustar, they came across a bed on which a dead body was lying and there was a book at the head of the bed. "We took the book to Umar who directed Ka'ab to translate it into Arabic. I was the first Arab to study this book. It dealt with the conditions of the Arabs and foretold many future events. We dug thirteen graves in the day light and buried the body secretly in one of these so that people may not know the real grave. The Persians used to hold Prophet Daniel in great esteem. During famine they used to take it out and supplicate for rain. It is said that it was the dead body of Prophet Daniel."

What the above report proves is that the Companions covered up the real grave lest people might be tempted. They did not believe that regards be paid to some grave.

Some persons cite the case of Abu Ayyub Ansari's grave which is revered by the inhabitants of Constantinople. But their practice does not have any sanction in Shariah. Nor does it stand out as a model for the Muslim to follow.

The practice of early pious Muslims

The Companions' graves were located at several places around which the Successors and other leading Muslims used to live. Never did they visit the Companions' graves for supplications or invocation. Had it been permissible, they would have done so and reports related to this practice would have reached us.

One who has studied historical writings of the period of early Muslims knows it full well that they did not make supplications or invocation near graves. On the contrary, if they came across some ignorant person doing so, they strictly prohibited it.

There are only two possibilities in the above case. Either one's prayer at these places is more acceptable in comparison to the one at other places or it is not so. Had the prayer been more acceptable at these places, it is unthinkable that the Companions, the Successors and their followers would have remained ignorant of it. It is impossible that the early Muslims who excelled us in every respect did not know this L1essings while we know it. Had they known about it, it raises the question why they never acted accordingly. Supplications are central to man's life. When in distress, one supplicates earnestly and does all that he can, for removing the ill tormenting him. Numerous ills struck the early Muslims yet they never prayed near graves.

It is also wrong to suppose that this practice is undesirable only in a slight degree. Had it been undesirable only in a slight degree, a man in distress would have never cared for the undesirability; and had such a supplication been not absolutely forbidden, rather simply undesirable, the early Muslims would have been inclined to do it sometime or other. But we know for sure that they never prayed near graves.

The sin related to praying near graves

Since there is no merit in making supplication near grave, as compared to do so at other places, supplicating there, in particular, is as an error and disobedience just as is setting apart some tree, shop, bath, river and mountain for this purpose. The Qur’an says:

﴿أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَٰٓؤُا۟ شَرَعُوا۟ لَهُم مِّنَ ٱلدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَنۢ بِهِ ٱللَّهُ﴾

"Or have they partners with Allah who had invented for them a religion which Allah has not allowed" (Al-Shura, 42:21).

Since Allah has not prescribed praying near grave as an obligatory or desirable act, someone holding this belief is covered by the above Qur'anic verse in that he invents what has not been permitted by Allah. Allah says:

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّىَ ٱلْفَوَٰحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَٱلْإِثْمَ وَٱلْبَغْىَ بِغَيْرِ ٱلْحَقِّ وَأَن تُشْرِكُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِۦ سُلْطَٰنًا وَأَن تَقُولُوا۟ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾﴾

"Say (O Muhammad): 'But the things that my Lord has forbidden are evil and sins, whether committed openly or secretly, sins (of all kinds), injustice, oppression, joining partner with Allah for which He has given no authority, and saying things about Allah of which you have no knowledge" (Al-A'raf, 7:33).

Praying near grave is one of the forms of polytheism which Allah has not sanctioned. There is no ground whatever to support the view that it is a desirable act to pray near graves. So one who takes it as part of faith ascribes to Allah something of which he has no knowledge. Allah is quit of such silly things, as is evident from the above verse. It demolishes all baseless reports and stories in this connection. Allah makes the same point with reference to the story of Prophet Abraham (Peace be upon him):

﴿ وَحَآجَّهُۥ قَوْمُهُۥۚ قَالَ أَتُحَٰٓجُّوٓنِّي فِي ٱللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَىٰنِۚ وَلَآ أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِۦٓ
إِلَّآ أَن يَشَآءَ رَبِّي شَيْـًٔاۗ وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًاۚ أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾
وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَآ أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُم بِٱللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ
بِهِۦ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَٰنًاۚ فَأَيُّ ٱلْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِٱلْأَمْنِۖ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨١﴾
ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوٓا۟ إِيمَٰنَهُم بِظُلْمٍ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ لَهُمُ ٱلْأَمْنُ وَهُم مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾
وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَآ ءَاتَيْنَٰهَآ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِۦۚ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَٰتٍ مَّن نَّشَآءُۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٨٣﴾ ﴾

"Abraham's people disputed with him. He said: "Do you dispute with me concerning Allah while He has guided me, and I fear not those whom you associate with Allah in worship, except when my Lord wills something. My Lord comprehends in His knowledge all things. Will you not then remember? And how should I fear those whom you associate in worship with Allah, while you fear not that you have joined in worship with Allah things for which He has not sent down to you any authority. So which of the two parties has more right to be in security, if you but know. It is those who believe and confuse not their belief with wrong, for them only there is security and they are guided. And that was Our proof We gave Abraham against his people. We raise whom We will in degrees. Certainly your Lord is AllWise, All-Knowing" (Al-An'am, 6:80-83).

Prophet Ibrahim's model

These polytheists tainted with polytheism, both major and minor, always try to frighten the sincere Muslims. Muslims should respond to them in the same way as Prophet Abraham (Peace be upon him) told the polytheists of his community that he was not fearful of their false gods in that they were Allah's creatures, without any power to hurt. Moreover, there is no one to withhold if Allah decides to benefit someone. The polytheists do not fear the Creator of the earth and the heavens and keep on inventing things in His faith and commit polytheism. Given this, who lays a greater claim to security? The believers who do not fear anyone except Allah and do not associate any with Him or, the polytheists who are guilty of polytheism which is not sanctioned by Allah. Allah elevates the status of the scholars through such arguments.

Arguments by those guilty of grave worship

Were one to ask how to refute the statements of some leading figures, as for example, the statement that Maruf Karkhi's grave is an antidote or the report about him that he had instructed his nephew to visit his grave for making supplication. Similar reports are found about many persons that they used to make supplications near the grave of the Messengers and the pious and that their supplications were granted. Some popular writers, describing Hajj rituals, state that one should make supplication while visiting the Prophet's grave. Some of them have stated that one who makes supplication there after reciting Durud seventy times, his supplication is readily granted. Likewise, some jurisprudents are credited with the view that it is lawful to recite the Qur'an at the Prophet's grave. In order to corroborate their viewpoint they argue that it is a blessed place in that it is lawful to send blessings or engage in Allah's remembrance there. By the same token of logic one may recite the Qur'an there. It is said that some people saw in a dream that they were praying while standing near the grave of some saints. Some have recounted how their supplication was granted when they prayed near the graves of Shaikh Abu al-Farah Shirazi and other saints. There are reports about leading scholars and saints who used to supplicate near grave and bow there. It is argued that it was the practice of certain leading figures who cannot be considered as ignorant of or acting against Shariah.

A clinching rejoinder

We have summarised above the main arguments advanced by those given to grave worship. We have already pointed out that it is an undesirable act and to the best of our knowledge there is no authentic report to the contrary in the three best periods, regarding which the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«خيرُ أُمَّتِي القَرْنُ الَّذِي بُعِثْتُ فِيهِ. ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ ، ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُم»

"The best period of my nation is the one in which I have been assigned the Messengership, then the one next to it, then the one next to it."

Had the above practice been part of Shariah, or a matter of reward, the early Muslims who belonged to the best period of Muslim history would not have remained ignorant or inactive on this count. They were very active in all acts of virtue and well advanced in knowledge. Since they never observed such a practice it can be safely asserted that there is no merit in this practice.

As to the Muslims of later generations, what we can say at most is that Muslims have been divided on this issue. The majority of pious persons and Ulema have declared it unlawful and some allow it. In the case of such divergence of opinion in the nation we have to tum to the Qur'an, Sunnah and consensus of the early Muslims and to abide by the same.

Slander against Imam Shafi'i

It is gratifying to note that there is not a single statement of a leading scholar in support of this innovation. Whatever reports there are, they are apparently false and amount to slander. For example, it is said about Imam Shafi'i that he said: "When I am faced with some hardship I visit and make supplication at Imam Abu Hanifa's grave which removes my hardship." As it is, this statement is slander against Imam Shafi'i. For when he visited Baghdad, there was not a single grave which was visited by the public for making supplication. Such a practice did not exist in the days of Imam Shafi'i. Moreover, Shafi'i knew about numerous graves of the Prophet's Companions and the Successors in Hijaz, Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Egypt, each of which was more exalted for him and for other Muslims, than Imam Abu Hanifa's grave, yet he never turned to anyone's grave. What is baffling is that he turned only to Imam Abu Hanifa's grave. Surprisingly enough, Abu Hanifa's students, for example, Abu Yusuf, Muhammad, Zufar and Hasan Ibn Ziyad, who were fully aware of Imam Abu Hanifa's exalted position, never turned to him or anyone else's grave. Moreover, Imam Shafi'i himself has branded grave worship as an undesirable act in his writings in order to protect the ignorant against error. Such reports are, actually, fabricated by those who suffer from both the lack of faith and sheer ignorance.

Statements attributed to unknown persons

Such statements are attributed to unknown persons. Even if these unknown narrators report something on the authority of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) we cannot accept their reportings unless these are proved authentically. While every care is taken even in the case of the Prophet's sayings, other reports stand in a greater need of scrutiny. It is likely that someone interpreted things in his own way, and he was guilty of wrong interpretation. Or he made a qualified statement which was tampered with by narrators. The same treatment has been meted out even to a Hadith. After the Prophet's initial prohibition of visiting graves, he allowed the same to let people to draw lessons. However, the wrong doers misconstrue it in the sense of praying near the graves, and making supplications there. The Hadith, of course, sanctions none of these practices.

Briefly, all the arguments of the grave worshippers in this connection are baseless. Either they are based on reports which do not have any credibility in Shariah or on such conjectures which cannot make an act a desirable one. This is not the way of Muslims. The Christians are accustomed to deciding their religious matters on the basis of such baseless and inauthentic reports. Nothing can be taken as part of Shariah by the Muslims unless it is proved by the Qur’an, Sunnah or the conduct of early Muslims.

Another rejoinder

The wrong doers may be refuted in two ways: (1) Abridged and (2) Detailed.

(1) Abridged: Inauthentic reports are also fairly common among the Jews and the Christians. Even the Arab polytheists, among whom the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent down, used to make supplications, while worshipping their idols; and some of their supplications were granted. We witness the same in the case of Christians, unbelievers and polytheists. So, if it is taken as the proof of the Divine sanction of this practice, it rules out any argument. Even the distinction between Islam and unbelief is blurred. Of course, even the wrong doers would not yield to the logic of this argument. H a supplication made at an idol or a grave is granted, it does not necessarily prove that such a practice is lawful and desirable. For we know that the supplications of even the worst polytheists are sometimes granted in that famine is removed from them and they gain victory in battles. So, if the granting of supplication is taken as the proof, the polytheists may also be in the right. Obviously no Muslim can entertain such views.

(2) Detailed: The argument of the wrong doers is based on two premises-reports and conjectures.

On the one hand, they cite the sayings and deeds of some leading persons in support of their viewpoint and on the other, they advance mere experiences and conjectures in order to substantiate their viewpoint. What ever be the case, it carries no weight as is scrutinised below:

Their contention is absolutely false. Even if it is true, it does not have sanction in Shariah. Moreover, we have already referred to the statements of the leading scholars which refute their viewpoints. These are the scholars who are followed by all the Muslims.

A study of their conjectural argument

As to all the claims regarding the supplication being granted at the graves and its benefits, these are, as a general rule, false. Rarely is one's desire fulfilled. The blessings of a grave has no role whatever in it. There might be many other factors for the same. On the contrary, those who invoke Allah directly are more readily granted what they ask for. If Allah is invoked with the same fervour, which is showered at graves, one can rarely be disappointed. Only in an exceptional case can one's supplication remain unanswered. As to those who make a sincere supplication to Allah, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ يَدْعُو اللهَ بدَعْوَةٍ لَيسَ فِيها إثمٌ ولا قَطِيعَةُ رَحِمٍ إلا أعطاهُ اللهُ بهَا إحدى خِصَالٍ ثَلاَثٍ : إمَّا أن يُعَجِّلَ اللهُ لَهُ دَعوَتَهُ ، أو يَدَّخِرَ لَهُ مِنَ الخَيْرِ مِثْلَهاَ ، أو يَصْرِفَ عنهُ مِنُ الشَّرِّ مِثْلَهاَ. قَالُوا : يارَسُولَ اللهِ ، إذَنْ نُكثِرَ ، قَالَ : اللهُ أَكثَرُ»

"When a servant prays to Allah, provided it is not regarding a sin or ill treatment with his relatives, Allah grants him one of the three: either his prayer is readily granted; or a similar blessing is reserved for him or an equivalent ill is removed from him." On hearing this the Companions submitted: "We would then make numerous supplications." He replied: "No matter how many supplications you make, Allah's mercy would not fail you."

So those turning to Allah are in a much advantageous position whereas those given to grave worship suffer even if their supplication is granted. For they are removed far from monotheism hence they are not likely to be bestowed with divine mercy. Moreover, they cannot taste faith which is enjoyed by true Muslims and which accrues blessings in both the worlds. It is not unlikely that the wrong doers are deprived of blessings altogether

unless Allah pardons them for their ignorance of the fact that they were indulging in acts of innovation and error.

Magic and other forbidden acts

Same holds true for all those acts which are considered beneficial, for example, astrology, magic and other occult sciences. Their harm overweighs their profit. Generally speaking, one does not get what one intends. Moreover, one practices these for worldly benefits. Even if one ever succeeds in getting what he wants through these, he often suffers in the world itself and regrets it. The consequences are disastrous. It does not include the loss in the Hereafter. Moreover, those who are unsuccessful are far more in number than those who ever get success thus. If someone succeeds by chance, it entails many evils. Were one to consider these beneficial, he would note that these are full of harm and defects.

A sure way to get what one wants

Man is foolish enough to resort to such harmful practices. There are perfectly legitimate ways and means, endorsed by Shariah, which help one secure all the lawful desires in this life and the Hereafter. Agriculture, business and other pursuits are the physical and natural means; whereas trusting in Allah, supplicating through the words in the manner of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), giving charity and doing virtuous deeds are the religious and supernatural means to get the legitimate desires fulfilled. And, thus, every goodness and benefit can be obtained.

The above point is corroborated by the Qur'an, Sunnah and the consensus of the Muslim community. Moreover, human experience bears ample testimony to it. Who can dare deny that Prayer and Zakah help one achieve all the blessings in both the worlds? Prayer and Zakah lead one to goodness and remove evil.

The point brought home is that no real goodness can be obtained through unlawful means. Rather, it generates only evil, even in such cases when man suffers from the delusion that he has attained some success. For, even the apparent success results in disastrous consequences. And this fills men with regret and remorse.

It is such commonplace that one with an average understanding would readily recognise this point.

Any apparent success born of unlawful means cannot shake our faith. For the causes and reasons for Allah to bring about the incidents and happenings, are numerous, which cannot be grasped by man, as His sovereignty and rule is boundlessly large.

The way of the Messengers and philosophers

The Messengers instruct man only in what ensures their welfare and prohibit them against what harms them. They do not engage the mind in unnecessary reflection and hair-splitting about the working of the universe, which is the objective of the so-called philosophers. For such discussions are too tiring, pointless and useless. They do more harm than good. The likeness of the Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is of a physician who diagnoses the patient and prescribes him suitable medicine and precautions. As the patient follows this instruction, he gains health. As compared to it, the so-called philosopher resembles a quasi-physician, who, in order to make a show of his knowledge, engages himself in the lengthy discussion on the probable causes and symptoms of disease. However, when the patient enquires him of the medicine which would cure him, it leaves him speechless in that he is simply unable to do so.

Why unlawful supplications are granted?

There are certain issues the discussion on which might mislead those with little intelligence and little faith. A sensible person appreciates the point that unlawful ways and means are never effective. Even if they succeed, their harm outweighs their benefits. Those depending on unlawful means, sometimes succeed in that they are desperate and out of their despair they supplicate too sincerely. If even a polytheist makes such a supplication while bowing to an idol, his invocation is likely to be granted notwithstanding his polytheism. For it represents a total commitment to God. In the same fashion a supplication made at a grave in earnestness may be granted. However, its polytheism would land the person into hell fire unless Allah pardons him.

The above supplication might be similar to that of a person invoking for something which may put him into trial, as in the case of Thalaba. He petitioned to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to pray on his behalf for increase in his wealth and children. Although the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) tried to dissuade him in that it would ultimately harm him, he persisted in his petition. Then the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did pray on his behalf and it was accepted by Allah. Initially it pleased Thalaba. However, afterwards, it ruined him both in this life and in the Hereafter.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

"Someone asks me of something which I give him. However, so doing he earns hell fire. The Companions submitted: "Why do you give him?" He replied: "Such people cannot help asking me. By temperament I cannot act miserly."

The right way of supplication

Many people make unsuitable supplications which are granted. It, however, ruins their worldly and next life. Allah asks us to supplicate thus:

﴿ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴾

"Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret. He likes not the aggressors" (Al-A'raf, 7:55).

We learn from the above verse that Allah does not approve that any excess be committed in invocation, either in its form or its content. Yet sometimes Allah grants the invocation of even him who commits excesses. It is a trial for him. Although Allah does not want to put him into trial, he invites it by making such invocation.

Resorting to magic for getting what one wants

Allah even fulfills the desire of someone who resorts to a magic and other occult sciences. Allah, however, makes it plain:

﴿وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ ۚ وَلَبِئْسَ مَا
شَرَوْا بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ۚ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾﴾

"And indeed they knew that buyers of magic would have no share in the Hereafter. And how bad indeed was that for which they sold their own selves, if they but knew. And if they had believed and guarded themselves from evil, far better would have been the reward from their Lord if they but knew" (Al-Baqarah, 2:103).

Those guilty of it acknowledge their sin and that they would suffer in the Hereafter. Yet they indulge in the acts for some worldly gain. However, as Allah says, they would not get any gain even in the world itself.

Similar is the condition of the persons who supplicate for something forbidden or undesirable and get the same fulfilled but they suffer a terrible loss afterwards.

The learned and the ignorant

Though supplicants are sometimes aware of the degrees of undesirableness and unlawfulness, sometimes they are not.

There are two possible forms of this ignorance; such ignorance which cannot be forgiven-for example, one who fails to gain knowledge or neglect the truth. Another form of ignorance is the one which may be forgiven, for example, a scholar who may have his own interpretation. Sometimes an ignorant person may be pardoned by Allah out of His mercy or for his numerous virtuous deeds or for some other reasons.

Supplication and other forms of worship

Supplication is like any other form of worship. We have already noted that any lapse in worship might be forgiven by Allah due to various reasons as for example a lot of virtuous deeds etc. Yet it does not mean that a particular form of worship may not be branded as undesirable, though someone may not be punished for that particular form of worship.

A common pitfall

This is a fairly common pitfall-on learning that some saint performed a particular form of worship or made a particular invocation which benefitted him, people follow the same practice, defining that particular form of worship as something desirable and approved in itself. They follow it like the Sunnah of a Messenger. As already explained by us, it is a serious mistake. It is likely that he may have got success owing to his full commitment and sincerity. Those imitating him would not share the same sincerity and they would therefore suffer rather getting benefit. Since the act is unlawful, those practising it cannot derive any benefit. Nor can it help those who merely imitate. For these people lack the integrity of that saint which might have compensated for his lapses.

CHAPTER: ECSTASY

It is said about certain saints that they experience ecstasy during songs. If these reports are valid, it may be the manifestation of the condition in their heart. They may have been prompted by the song and their act may be attributed to either their personal interpretation or weakness in their commitment. However, if the general public attend such meetings in their imitation and claim to follow them, the practice of the saints cannot be taken as the norm. It would lead to the loss of their faith. It is said about a saint that someone saw him after his death in a dream. When asked how Allah had treated him he replied: "Allah made me stand in His presence and told me angrily: O wretched person! You used to have ecstasy while listening to the couplets of such and such poets. Had I not known that you were sincere in your approach, I would have certainly seized you with terrible punishment."

Sahnun Muhib

It is said about Sahnun Muhib that he said: "Once I was tormented by certain doubts and I went to a dry tree saying: O God! By Your might! I would not move away till a fish comes out from this spot. As a result, a huge fish appeared." According to the narrator, when Junaid Baghdadi heard this report he exclaimed: "I wish a snake had come out and bitten him."

Similarly, I have come across a report that someone appeared at the Prophet's grave and expressed his desire to have delicious food. A local person brought him food saying that it had been sent by the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) with the message: "You better go away from here. For one who desires my company does not long for delicious food."

Some people do get what they want and no objection can be made against them in that either they are capable of making their own interpretation or they fall prey to pardonable form of conformity. They are ignorant persons hence they are excused for which others cannot be forgiven.

Acts of the ignorant persons

Most of such reports are related to the ignorant people. Had the above report been valid and part of Shariah, the Ulema would have been familiar with these and taken a leading role.

It is not fair to say that since they were ignorant, they are justified in these acts. For Allah has not permitted such acts for anyone. What can be said, at most, is that an ignorant person stands a greater chance of pardon and forgiveness. However, what is unforgivable is that undesirable acts be considered as desirable and unlawful things be taken as the lawful ones.

The distinction should be strictly maintained. It is one thing that someone's unlawful acts be overlooked by Allah and it is quite another that such an act be regarded as lawful or desirable. So, if one learns that someone made a supplication at the grave of some Messenger or saint and it was granted, one should not conclude that the act in itself was desirable.

Someone's sayings are not part of Shariah to be followed unquestioningly. It should be realised that nothing can be taken as desirable or as part of faith unless it is approved by the Qur'an, Sunnah and the conduct of the earlier generations. No innovation can be considered as desirable, though it may have some occasional benefit. For we know that its harm is much more than its benefits.

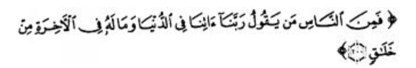
Undesirability and unlawfulness in invocation

A supplication is rendered unlawful or undesirable owing to its form or its content. As to the unlawful contents, it refers to a supplication in which one asks for something which would hurt him in this life or the Next. An instance in point is that,

كَالرَّجُلِ الذي عَادَهُ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ فَوَجَدَهُ مِثْلَ الفَرْخِ فَقَالَ: «هَلْ كنتَ تَدْعُو اللهَ بِشَيءٍ؟ قَالَ: كُنتُ أقولُ اللهُمَّ مَا كُنْتَ مُعَاقِبَنِي بِهِ فِي الآخِرَةِ فَعَجِّلْهُ لِي فِي الدُّنْيَا. قَالَ: سُبْحَانَ اللهِ، إنَّكَ لا تَسْتَطِيعُهُ، أو لا تُطِيقُهُ، هَلاَّ قُلْتَ: رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً، وَفِي الآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ؟»

"The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) visited someone who was ill and found him in a miserable condition. He asked him: "Did you make some invocation." He replied in affirmative, explaining that he used to supplicate:" O Allah! Inflict on me the punishment You would do on me in the Hereafter." The Prophet said: "Glory be to Allah! You were not capable of enduring it. Why did you not pray: "O Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and save us from the torment of the Fire."

Allah condemns those who seek only worldly things:



"There are those who say: Our Lord! Give us Your bounties in this world! And he will have no portion in the Hereafter" (Al-Baqarah, 2:200).

Allah makes it plain that one who seeks only the bounties of the world will have no share in the next life.

The curse of the sincere people

Many people suffer from the weakness of cursing others. They are so much overtaken by love or enmity for one that they make an invocation or curse which is not justified. If their invocation is granted, they incur punishment owing to their invocation or other sins. And if they do not repent or do not have goodness to their credit, or are not interceded by someone, they are liable to severe punishment, for example, loss of faith and decrease in their status or they tum into transgressors. Faith is removed from their hearts and they turn into unbelievers, with or without hypocrisy.

Those without insights into spiritual matters and ignorant of Shariah are likely to suffer from sin. Sometimes they are so much devoted to their mentor that they do not see reason. Sometimes they are liable to be a target of a curse. What accounts for it is that they neglect their Shariah duties hence they are liable to punishment. If it is done out of personal interpretation, it may be forgiven.

Miraculous Power (Charisma)

Such persons and their disciples take pride in their effective invocation, believing it as a miraculous power granted by God. Actually these are no miracles. These resemble miracles only in that they are effective. However, a real miracle is one which would benefit one in the Hereafter or may help one in this life without affecting the Hereafter. Unsuitable supplications resemble wealth and power to the unbelievers and the transgressors in this life. We know that these bounties are divine blessings as long as these do not ruin one of the Hereafter. Ulema have disputed for long whether material prosperity of the unbelievers is a divine blessing or not. Allah says:

﴿ أَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّمَا نُمِدُّهُم بِهِ مِن مَّالٍ وَبَنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ نُسَارِعُ لَهُمْ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ بَل لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ ﴾

"Do they think that We enlarge them in wealth and children, We hasten them with good things in this worldly life so that they will have no share of good things in the Hereafter? Nay, but they perceive not" (Al-Muminun, 23: 55-56).

﴿ فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُم بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُم مُّبْلِسُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ ﴾

"So when they forgot the warning with which they had been reminded, We opened to them gates of every (pleasant) thing, until in the midst of their enjoyment in that which they were given, all of a sudden, We took them to punishment, and lo! They were plunged into destruction with deep regrets and sorrow" (Al-Anam, 6:44).

According to Hadith, if one notes that a sinner is constantly bestowed with divine blessings it should be taken as the extension of divine respite.

Praying to someone other than Allah

In so far as the forbidden form of invocation, it may be owing to the fact that invocation is addressed to someone other than Allah, for example, magicians invoking stars, yet many of their invocations are granted. Most of their supplications are accepted in the period which does not coincide with the period of the Messenger and in places where unbelief and hypocrisy are rife.

I personally know such persons who invoke a living person in crisis and their crisis is over, though the person invoked is totally unaware of the whole thing. There are persons who tum to others to torture them. Yet the interference of a living or dead person, as perceived by them, does not let them accomplish it. They feel that a dead or living person is about to strike them with a sword whereas the living person does not know anything about it. Actually it is from Allah and it is owing to a certain link between the victim and the rescuer, which acts as a barrier between the victim and the aggressor, for example, the victim might be the follower of the rescuer in all that is right.

So if the effect appears after the invocation it cannot be held that this effect is caused by that person out of his miraculous power as the invoked person has got no knowledge of his invocation. However, if it is said that God has caused this miraculous effect in view of the piety of that person, it is also not correct to attribute it to God as the invocation made is in an unlawful way. An analogy would be that if one takes poison and suffers on that account, this would not be and cannot be ascribed to Allah.

Sometimes a supplication is unlawful in that it is addressed to someone other than Allah, for example, the supplication of Christians who invoke the holy mother to intercede with God. Sometimes, the invocation is addressed to God but through some intermediary, for example, polytheists invoke their deities in praying to God. Sometimes it is unsuitably worded.

Such supplication may at times be successful yet these are unlawful in that their harm overweighs their benefits. As a result such invocations are a trial for those who are not guided by God and their hearts are not illumined by His refulgence.

Divine decree and legislation

The difference between divine decree and legislation-it should be realised that, there are three possibilities on this count: (I) Matters which have been decreed by Allah which He does not approve. So, all the means prompting such matters are forbidden and would entail divine penalty. (2) Matters which Allah has legislated and which He approves for His servants yet He does not support in their attainment. Such matters are praiseworthy in all cases, no matter whether one pursues these or not. (3) Matters which are praiseworthy and desirable and Allah helps His servant in attaining these.

To the first category belong matters related to divine support, the second to His worship and the third being a combination of worship on man's part and divine support. The last category is the most exalted. Hence Allah has taught Muslims to pray: "We worship You alone and we seek help from You alone." So, the result brought out by an undesirable supplication should be viewed as part of support, not as the matter of worship in that all the unbelievers transgressors and hypocrites are treated equally. Allah praises Maryam for testifying to the word and the Scripture of her Lord. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) used to take refuge with such perfect divine utterances which encompass both the pious and the transgressors.

Proof of monotheism

It is part of divine mercy that polytheistic and undesirable supplications help attain only trivial things. But these do not work at the times of major troubles. Allah says:

﴿قُلْ أَرَءَيْتَكُمْ إِنْ أَتَىٰكُمْ عَذَابُ ٱللَّهِ أَوْ أَتَتْكُمُ ٱلسَّاعَةُ أَغَيْرَ ٱللَّهِ تَدْعُونَ إِن
كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ بَلْ إِيَّاهُ تَدْعُونَ فَيَكْشِفُ مَا تَدْعُونَ إِلَيْهِ إِن شَآءَ وَتَنسَوْنَ مَا
تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤١﴾﴾

"Say: Tell me if Allah's penalty comes upon you, or the Hour comes upon you, would you then call upon any other than Allah? Reply if you are truthful! Nay! To Him alone you call, and, if He will, He would remove that which you call upon Him, and you forget at that time whatever partners you joined with Him" (Al-Anam, 6:40-41).

﴿وَإِذَا مَسَّكُمُ ٱلضُّرُّ فِى ٱلْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَن تَدْعُونَ إِلَّآ إِيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا نَجَّىٰكُمْ إِلَى ٱلْبَرِّ أَعْرَضْتُمْ
وَكَانَ ٱلْإِنسَٰنُ كَفُورًا ﴿٦٧﴾﴾

"And when harm touches you upon the sea, those that you call upon, besides Him vanish from you except Allah. But when He brings you safely to land, you tum away from Him and man is ever ungrateful" (Al-Isra, 17:67).

﴿أَمِ ٱتَّخَذُوا۟ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ شُفَعَآءَ قُلْ أَوَلَوْ كَانُوا۟ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا
يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ قُل لِّلَّهِ ٱلشَّفَٰعَةُ جَمِيعًا﴾

"Have they taken others as intercessors besides Allah. Say: Even if they have power over nothing whatever and have no intelligence? Say: To Allah belongs all intercession" (Al-Zumar, 39:43-44).

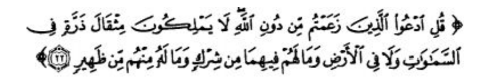
That the supplications are granted by praying directly to Allah vindicates monotheism and removes all doubts about polytheism. It proves also that all that happens is caused by Allah alone, Who does

not have any partner, though these might appear to happen as a result of either lawful or unlawful means. Since Allah has created the earth, the heavens, the winds and the cloud and other huge bodies, it has to be conceded that He has created things of lower status as well. A thing created by His creatures would naturally be called His creation. For something created by the creatures represents again divine creation.

CHAPTER: KINDS OF POLYTHEISM

There are two main forms of polytheism: (1) polytheism in Allah's lordship (Rububiyat); (2) polytheism in Allah's divinity (Uloohiyat).

What constitutes the former is that someone other than Allah be taken as the partner in His design and planning. Allah says:



"Say: Call upon those whom you assert besides Allah, they possess not even the weight of an atom-either in the heavens or on the earth, nor have they any share in either, nor there is for Him any supporter from among them" (Saba, 34:22).

Allah makes it abundantly plain that false gods do not enjoy any power. Nor do they provide assistance in anything. Obviously, someone who is neither the Lord nor the associate nor the helper has nothing to do and cannot hurt or profit anyone.

As to polytheism in divinity, it betrays that someone other than Allah be worshipped or invoked. For Allah alone deserves all worship and supplication. Man has been asked to worship and seek help from Him alone. Just as the creation of something by the creatures is not contrary to Monotheism in Creation, nor can it serve as an argument against Allah as the Creator, nor it leads to the conclusion that some creatures deserve to be worshipped or invoked; similarly, if one gets benefited from some polytheistic deeds at anytime, it does not impair Monotheism in worship nor does it nullify the view that Allah alone deserves all worship. One should not infer from it that such vocabulary may be used or such deed may be performed which betrays polytheism and of which harm outweighs its benefits. For all

goodness and welfare may be had only from worshipping and seeking help from Allah alone.

Many Qur’anic verses make this fundamental point. Allah has even ruled out intercession without His leave. He says:

﴿ مَن ذَا ٱلَّذِى يَشْفَعُ عِندَهُۥٓ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِۦ ﴾

"Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His permission" (Al-Baqarah, 2:255).

﴿ وَأَنذِرْ بِهِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَن يُحْشَرُوٓا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ لَيْسَ لَهُم مِّن دُونِهِۦ وَلِىٌّ وَلَا
شَفِيعٌ ﴾

"And warn therewith those who fear that they will be gathered before their Lord, when there will be neither a protector nor intercessor for them besides Him" (Al-An 'am, 6:51).

﴿ وَذَكِّرْ بِهِۦٓ أَن تُبْسَلَ نَفْسٌۢ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ وَلِىٌّ وَلَا
شَفِيعٌ ﴾

"But remind them with the Qur'an; lest a person be given up to destruction for that which he has earned, when he will find for himself no protector or intercessor besides Allah" (Al-An'am, 6:70).

﴿ قُلْ أَنَدْعُوا مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنفَعُنَا وَلَا يَضُرُّنَا وَنُرَدُّ عَلَىٰٓ أَعْقَابِنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ
هَدَىٰنَا ٱللَّهُ كَٱلَّذِى ٱسْتَهْوَتْهُ ٱلشَّيَٰطِينُ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ حَيْرَانَ لَهُۥٓ أَصْحَٰبٌ يَدْعُونَهُۥٓ إِلَى
ٱلْهُدَى ٱئْتِنَا قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَى ٱللَّهِ هُوَ ٱلْهُدَىٰ وَأُمِرْنَا لِنُسْلِمَ لِرَبِّ
ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ ﴾

"Say: 'Shall we invoke others besides Allah that can do us neither good nor harm, and shall we tum on our heels after Allah has guided us?' like one whom the devils have made to go astray, confused through the earth, his companions calling him to guidance (saying):

'Come to us'. Say: 'Verily, Allah's guidance is the only guidance, and we have been commanded to submit (ourselves) to the Lord of the worlds"' (Al-An'am, 6:71).

﴿ ولقد جئتمونا فرادى كما خلقناكم أول مرة وتركتم ما خولناكم وراء ظهوركم
وما نرى معكم شفعاءكم الذين زعمتم أنهم فيكم شركاء لقد تقطع بينكم
وضل عنكم ما كنتم تزعمون ﴿٩٤﴾ ﴾

''And truly you have come unto Us alone as We created you the first time. You have left behind you all that which We had bestowed on you. We see not with you your intercessors whom you claimed to be partners with Allah. Now all relations between you and the1n have been cut off and all that you used to claim has vanished from you" (Al-An'am, 6:94).

Surah Al-An'am is a grand Surah setting forth the fundamentals of faith. Allah says:

﴿ ثم استوى على العرش ما لكم من دونه من ولي ولا شفيع أفلا تتذكرون ﴿٤﴾ ﴾

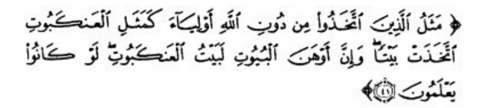
"He rose above the throne. You have none, besides Him, as a protector or intercessor" (Al-Sajdah, 32:4).

Surah Al-Zumar too contains similar statements about faith. Another passage of this import is: Allah says:

﴿ ومن الناس من يعبد الله على حرف فإن أصابه خير اطمأن به وإن أصابته فتنة
انقلب على وجهه خسر الدنيا والآخرة ذلك هو الخسران المبين ﴿١١﴾ يدعوا
من دون الله ما لا يضره وما لا ينفعه ذلك هو الضلال البعيد ﴿١٢﴾
يدعوا لمن ضره أقرب من نفعه لبئس المولى ولبئس العشير ﴿١٣﴾ ﴾

"And among mankind is he who worships Allah as it were upon the very edge (i.e. in doubt); if good befalls him, he is content therewith; but if a trial befalls him, he turns back on his face. He loses both this world and the Hereafter. That is the evident loss. He calls besides

Allah unto that which hurts him not nor profits him. That is a straying far away. He calls unto him whose harm is nearer than his profit; certainly, an evil patron and certainly an evil friend" (Al-Hajj, 22:11-13).



"The likeness of those who take protectors and helpers other than Allah is as the likeness of a spider, who builds a house, but verily the weakest of houses is the spiders' house-if they but knew" (Al-'Ankabut, 29:41).

Throughout, the Qur'an brings home this basic component of faith. The above account clarifies what kind of invocations are desirable. Even if a depraved form of invocation is granted, it cannot change the rule.

Invocation-Philosophers and Sufis

There is much divergence of opinion about invocation. One group of so-called philosophers and Sufis believe that invocation is useless. For what is sought has already been either decreed or not. If it is decreed, there is no need for invocation, for it is bound to happen. And if Allah has not decreed it, all invocation is pointless in that it would be never granted to him.

For another group what is sought determines the decree of invocation. For them, it does not represent the relationship as one finds in cause and effect.

Invocation in the view of believers

The sound creed is of the majority of Muslims that invocation, like all other lawful and natural means helps one attain success. Whether invocation is taken as the cause or part of the cause, leads to the same result. When Allah intends to do some good, He inspires him to invoke Him; and makes this supplication serve as the excitant for goodness to him. He does get what has been already decreed for him. Umar made the same point in observing that it is his duty to make supplication; he is not concerned about its acceptance. However, when Allah inspires him to make a certain supplication, it is likely to be granted.

The above point may be grasped well with reference to the following examples: When Allah decides to remove one's craving for food and drink, He inspires him to eat and drink. Likewise when Allah intends to pardon someone, He inspires him to seek forgiveness. As a result, he seeks repentance and is granted pardon. In the same vein, when Allah intends to admit someone to Paradise, He facilitates for him such acts which would make him enter Paradise.

It is part of the divine plan that goodness should come into being by its natural means, just as one is to enter paradise due to one's virtuous deeds; birth of a child is the result of the union between male and female, and gaining of Knowledge is due to learning. Thus in all the matters Allah initiates the action and its completion also lies with Him. He exercises full control over everything. So, he renders the invocation as a cause for the divine decree. Someone asked the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him):

«يارَسُولَ اللهِ ، أرَأيتَ أدْوِيَةً نَتَداوَى بِهَا ، ورُقًى نَسْتَرْقِي بِهَا ، وتُقًى نَتَّقِيهَا : هَل تَرُدُّ مِن قَدَرِ اللهِ شَيئاً ؟ قَالَ : هِيَ مِنْ قَدَرِ اللهِ»

"Do you think our medicine, incantations and precautions prevent divine decrees? He replied: These are part of the divine decree."

He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) also said

«إِنَّ الدُّعَـاءَ وَالبَـلاَءَ لَيَلْتَقِيَـانِ فَيَعْتَلِجَـانِ بَيْنَ السَّمَـاءِ والأَرْضِ»

"That invocation and calamity are constantly in clash with each other in between the earth and the heavens."

So far we had been discussing the type of invocation which helps one to get what one wants. In so far as such invocations which are against Shariah and forbidden, we have covered them in the preceding chapter.

CHAPTER: OFFERING - ITS NATURE

Same holds true for offering. Al-Bukhari reports on the authority of Abdullah Ibn Umar that

«أَنَّهُ نَهَى عَنِ النَّذْرِ. وَقَالَ: إِنَّهُ لا يَأْتِي بِخَيْرٍ. وَإِنَّمَا يُسْتَخْرَجُ بِهِ مِنَ الْبَخِيلِ»

the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) prohibited it in that it does no good. Only a miser spends money thus. According to Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِنَّ النَّذْرَ لا يُقَرِّبُ مِن ابنِ آدَمَ شَيئاً لَمْ يَكُنِ اللهُ قَدَّرَهُ لَهُ. وَلَكِنِ النَّذْرُ يُوَافِقُ الْقَدَرَ، فَيخرَجُ بِذلِكَ مِنَ الْبَخِيلِ مَا لَم يَكُنِ الْبَخِيلُ يُرِيدُ أَن يُخرِجَهُ»

"An offering does not help in what is not in one's destiny. It, however, becomes part of destiny in that a miser spends what he was not otherwise likely to give away."

The above Hadith clearly states that an offering does no good. Nor does it remove an evil. If it seems good, it is only on account of the fact that it synchronizes with destiny. Or it falls in line with other contributing factors. It is therefore pointless to make an offering yet people do not give it up. It is through this mechanism that Allah takes out the money of the miser for distribution among the poor. Had the miser not been fond of offering, they would not have spent that money.

It is strange that in spite of the uselessness of offering, a large number of people indulge in the same. Their number is almost equal to those who invoke at graves. Offerings at graves are the means of earning bread for a large number of grave worshippers. They thrive at the expense of naive people. Even a great miser spends generously

in the name of offerings and ignorantly believes that due to this, his desires have been fulfilled. However the fact is that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) has categorically stated that not to speak of unlawful offerings, even the lawful ones and in obedience to Allah, have nothing to do with the fulfillment of one's desires. Nevertheless, if it appears to someone that he has succeeded in getting what he wanted, after paying an offering, it is merely by chance that he offered his offering in the time when he was to get his wants itself fulfilled by Allah's decree.

Same holds true for unlawful supplications also. None of these has got any role in getting one's desire fulfilled.

The misguided and the guided ones

There are three categories of people: those who have incurred divine wrath, the misguided ones and the guided ones.

Those in the first category are sceptic about both the approved and disapproved means and ways. They think that invocation endorsed by Shari'ah is sometimes successful and at others unsuccessful. Those in the second category readily take the everything as the cause which has even little possibility to be the so, even if the issue is related to the Jewish, Christian and Magian faith.

As to philosophers, they attribute every effect to celestial forces and natural phenomena and they appear to be victims of a circular argument.

The viewpoint of the guided ones

To the third category belong those who have been rightly guided. They do not reject the power which Allah has infused into all bodies and souls in that it is also Allah's creation. Yet they believe in the power which is superior to all othersAllah's supreme power exercising control over everything. They believe that Allah is constantly engaged as in granting invocations, though man's own efforts or spiritual powers do not play any role in the acceptance of their invocation: He produces miracles in order to affirm the veracity of His Messengers: sometimes He does the same in order to support His religion as a supreme reward for them. Muslims believe that Allah accepts good deeds and invocations which are endorsed by Shariah. And through this He removes the power inherent in the bodies and spirits. Moreover, they never resort to the means forbidden by Shariah, no matter how popular these may be. It should be believed that if something is forbidden in Shariah, it can never be taken as the means for getting something. This is sheer common sense in that it is supported by reason.

Moreover, there is not any point in invoking someone that can neither hear nor do any good. Furthermore, its harm would be much more than its good. While in the case of something approved by Shariah, its good would be more than its harm. For Shariah forbids only that which is harmful.

Another factor for the acceptance of supplication

It raises the question how to find out whether a particular event was prompted by a particular cause. As in physical matters, in the case of Shariah matters too, there are ways to find out, one of which is to fall into acute problem. In the Prophet's day his Companions were often faced with a shortage of food and water. He touched a small quantity of water which caused a fountain of water to burst forth. Likewise, he touched a small quantity of food which sufficed everyone. In view of these events one believes that it was owing to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He is taken as the cause in the sense that if one dies with a blow of sword, it is taken as the cause of death. In the reports regarding increase in food and water there is no cause other than the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to account for the increase.

Similarly, he had prayed for Anas that Allah grant him increase in children and wealth. His orchid had two crops a year whereas a single crop was the norm. As to the increase in his children, he was blessed with more than one hundred sons and grandsons. Of course, the Prophet's prayer accounts for it.

If one observes a baby crying and he becomes happy once the mother feeds him, feeding is taken as the cause.

Probability and doubts may be raised in cases of general rules, but not in such events of definite and particular nature.

Supplications of certain saints

Same holds true for supplications. Sometimes a Muslim makes a supplication and it is readily granted, though there are no favourable circumstances for the same. Or someone asks for something by invoking Allah and accomplishes it. For example, "Ala Ibn Al-hadarmi prayed: "O All-Knowing, Most Forbearing,

O the Exalted and the Mighty! Grant us rain." No sooner had he prayed than it started raining, though it was a hot sunny day without a trace of cloud. What is more surprising is that the rain fell only at the spot where he along with his army was standing. Likewise, he prayed for safe passage through a big river. And they did cross it while even the hoaves of their horses did not get wet. Ayyub Bakhtalani hit a mountain while he was faced with the acute thirst of his companion. It resulted in the appearance of a spring and once they took water, the spring disappeared altogether.

Both the divine revelation and common sense prove that a supplication to the One True God is effective. Numerous instances make the same point. It has been observed on countless occasions that the Muslims prayed for something, which was otherwise impossible to secure, yet Allah provided them with the same. These instances are enough to persuade one that supplication was the key to it. Those gifted with reason and common sense concede this point.

On the contrary, only the ignorant believe that forbidden supplications are helpful in getting things. They are the ones who cannot discern between right and wrong. Only such people are convinced about the effectiveness of these supplications who are lying in the darkness of unbelief, hypocrisy and sins. Since their hearts have been blackened by their wrongdoings, they are unable to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

CHAPTER: SUPPLICATION NEAR THE PROPHET'S GRAVE

As to the supplication referred to in the Hajj rituals that one should make the supplication after having sent blessings on the Prophet and his Companions, Imam Ahmad and other scholars suggest that one should stand facing Qibla while the Prophet's apartment should be on left so that one does not stand with one's back to it. It does not call into question our point stated above. For there is nothing wrong in the supplication, rather it is something desired, as we learn from Sunnah. We have already taken note of the point that what is undesirable is that we should undertake a journey only to the Prophet's grave for the purpose of making some supplication.

The followers of Imam Malik hold that the visitor should approach the Prophet's grave, send blessings, turn his back to it and then facing Qibla he should make supplication. Some Ulema forbid turning one's back to it. It is, however, an altogether different point which needs not engage us here.

Ulema have perhaps suggested the above method in view of the fact that it is undesirable to offer prayer while facing the grave. That the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade it, has been already mentioned. In light of the Prophet's (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) prohibition to pray (offer salat) near the grave, Ulema suggest that one should also not make supplication facing it. In his Mabsut Imam Malik goes to the extent of saying that it is not proper at all to supplicate while standing near the Prophet's grave. Rather, one should leave the area immediately after sending blessings on him.

This factor possibly accounts for a slight diversion in direction of the Prophet's apartment. Its north wall does not lie exactly in the

direction of Qibla that one may supplicate standing there. Since it is forbidden to offer Salat in any direction other than that of Ka'ba, it is not also desirable that one should adopt prohibited directions for supplication.

Supplication by the practitioners of innovation

It spite of it we observe many people adopting the same direction for their supplication in which the grave of a saint is situated. It is a blatant error. Similarly, many people do not turn their back to the graves of saints while they take no care in turning their back to the Ka'ba and the Prophet's grave. Such practices smack of innovation and are in imitation of the ways of Christians.

Islamic scholars have taken a special care that Sunnah be strictly observed in sending blessings on him. For any laxity might render it undesirable or make it similar to the ways of the Christians. This is in accordance with the Prophet's command that his grave be not taken as a place of congregation. He warned also that he be not extolled as Christians venerate Jesus, son of Mary. He presented himself as a servant of Allah hence the insistence that he be referred to as Allah's Messenger and His servant.

Visiting the Prophet's grave

In this regard some Ulema took such a precautionary measure that they even raised doubts about saying 'salam' at Prophet's grave. However those Ulema were informed that Ibn Umar used to send blessings. Imam Malik and other Madinan Ulema held it undesirable for the local people to visit and send blessings on the graves of the Prophet and the Companions whenever they visit the Prophet's mosque. They granted permission only when one was on a journey or on his return. Some Ulema, however, do not subscribe to this view. Moreover, to the best of my knowledge, no scholar has granted permission in absolute terms for visiting the Prophet's grave for sending blessings. For it amounts to taking it as a place of congregation whereas Shariah prescribes that as we enter the mosque we should greet him in the manner as we do in our ritual prayer. Even when one enters an empty house he should send blessings upon the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). For no matter from where the blessings are sent, these reach him.

Imam Malik was highly sensitive on this point lest the Prophet's grave be taken as a place of congregation. Moreover, it constitutes innovation. For, in the days of the Rightly Guided Caliphs Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali both the Muhajireen and Ansar offered the five daily obligatory prayers in the Prophet's mosque yet they did not visit the Prophet's grave for sending blessings on him. For they were familiar with the Prophet's disapproval of this practice. Whenever they entered and left the mosque they would simply greet him in exactly the same manner as they would do in the obligatory prayer (saying السلام علیک ایها النبی ورحمۃ الله وبرکاتہ). The same practice .was followed by them in the Prophet's lifetime.

The same point is illustrated by Ibn Umar's conduct. Abd alRahman ibn Zaid narrates on the authority of his father that when Ibn Umar returned from a journey, he visited the Prophet's grave, sent blessings on him, on Abu Bakr and on his father, Umar.

Cause of polytheism and innovation

Imam Malik has rightly said that the Muslim Ummah will be set right in its last phase in the same manner as it had gained perfection in its early days; religious communities tend to grow weaker and weaker in faith with the passage of time. What is worse, they are drawn more and more to polytheism and innovation. Initially the Muslim community disapproved kissing or touching the Prophet's grave as a mark of blessings. It was constructed in a way to render it inaccessible to the general public. Ayesha's apartment in which the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) lies buried, was in the vicinity of the Prophet's mosque. This situation obtained in the days of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and at a later date. Waleed ibn Abd al-Malik reconstructed it while Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz was the Governor of Madina. He bought the adjoining apartments and made them part of the mosque. It was resented by some Ulema, for example, by Saeed ibn Musayyab.

Touching the Prophet's grave

According to Abu Bakr ibn al-Athram, he asked Imam Ahmad about the validity of the practice of wiping at the Prophet's grave and touching one's face with the same. He replied: "I am not aware of its validity." He then asked him about touching the Prophet's pulpit. To this he replied: "This is permissible, for a report states Ibn Umar touching the same." He added that there was another report on record about Yahya Ibn Saeed that he touched the Prophet's pulpit while he was going to Iraq. Imam Ahmad remarked: "It is perhaps permissible in time of need." Then someone said: "People stand there with their back to the wall of the Prophet's grave." I added: "I have seen the Madinan Ulema not wiping the Prophet's grave. Rather they send greeting while standing in a side." Imam Ahmad endorsed this practice, adding that Ibn Umar used to do the same.

One thus learns that Imam Ahmad has allowed that the Prophet's pulpit be touched yet this permission does not extend to the Prophet's grave.

However, Imam Malik disapproves that even the Prophet's pulpit be touched. He regards it undesirable that his pulpit or grave be touched. This discussion is pointless today in that the pulpit is burnt and exists no more, with only a piece of wood remaining of the same. The report about Ibn Umar tells, at most, that he had touched the Prophet's pulpit.

Selecting graves for supplication

To tum to graves particularly for supplication is undesirable in that it is branded so by the classical scholars. They derive it from Hadith that the Prophet's grave is not to be taken as a place of congregation. We have made this point earlier with reference to the statement of Ali ibn Hussain and Hasan ibn Hasan. They were leading members of the Prophet's family and possessed ample knowledge about this issue in view of their kinship to him.

We have cited Imam Ahmad's view that if someone intends to make a supplication for himself, after having sent blessings on the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions, he should tum away, face Qibla and make supplication. Many scholars, for example, Imam Malik, Abu al Wafa and Abu al-Faraj regard it as undesirable act.

To the best of my knowledge no Companion, Successor, leading scholar holds supplicating near graves as a desirable act. There is no' ling to support this practice on the basis of Sunnah and the conduct of the Companions, Successors and other leading scholars. Many scholars have authored works about supplication while taking into account all relevant material. Yet none of them has said a single word about the excellence of making supplication near graves. Since the classical scholars were totally unaware of this practice, rather they prohibited it, it can never be taken as a desirable or excellent act.

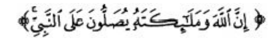
When this practice started?

By the third century Hijrah we come across reports that one may expect a supplication to be granted if he does so near the grave of a particular person or that one should pray near someone's grave. However, these reports contain also serious objections to this practice. Those holding such views had made their own interpretation and Allah may pardon them. Nonetheless, this position cannot be taken as sound or worth following. For in its essence it is similar to holding a particular river, well, tree, cave, stone, or idol as sacred and to believe that an offering made to it would be definitely accepted. Such views do not have any sanction in Shari'ah. By the same token, the above statement regarding graves do not have any place in Shariah.

Baseless reports

There is not a single authentic report in support of the above mentioned practice. Ibn abi al-Duniya cites Muhammad Ibn Ismail bin Abi Fadaik's report in his Kitab al Qubur that An as related the Hadith that one who visits the Prophet's grave would find him as his witness and intercessor on the Last Day.

Moreover, he states: "I have heard some Ulema that one who recites a Qur'anic verse,



"Allah sends His Salat on the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and also His angel too. O, You who believe! send your Salat on him and greet him with the Islamic way of greeting." (33:56)

at the Prophet's grave, followed by reciting blessing (صلى الله عليک يا محمد) seventy times, an angel informs him of Allah's blessings upon him. Afterwards, what he desires, he gets it."

The above report may be cited in support of the desirability of making supplications near graves. This view is not acceptable, for the above report is not authentic as it refers to an unknown person. Such reports cannot be taken as a sound basis for Shariah. Moreover, the narrator himself is neither a Successor nor a leading scholar. There is nothing to suggest that his report has any weight or that it points to a prevalent practice in the early days of Islam. This point becomes all the more striking in that none of the Madinan Ulema have made a similar point. Moreover, the import of the above report is patently contrary to authentic Hadith. For the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "One who sends blessings on me once Allah sends on him ten times." However, according to above report, in response to one's blessings seventy times, the angel sends the blessings only once. Moreover, this is possible only when the

blessings are sent while one is physically standing in front of the Prophet's grave.

However, we know from authentic Hadith that one's blessings reach the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), no matter where one is.

As to the reports to the effect that some persons greeted at the Prophet's grave or at those of some pious people and that they heard its response. There is a report to the same effect that Saeed Ibn Mussayab used to hear Adhan from inside the Prophet's grave at nights during the Harrah battle. Or that during the severe famine someone visited the Prophet's grave and related the disaster caused by the famine. He then saw the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) coming out of his grave ordering: "Tell Umar to offer Istisqa prayer." These and alike incidents might be possibly true yet these lie outside our discussion. For they do not and cannot justify the supplication which is not endorsed by Shariah. These instances may be taken as miracles in relation to the persons these are attributed. It does not prove in any way that the person making such a supplication was justified in his act or that he observed Shariah in doing so.

Reason for the prohibition against venerating graves

This misperception needs to be dispelled that practices such as praying near graves or taking these as mosque are prohibited with a view to denying sanctity to the dead. What accounts for its prohibition is that the general public be not put to some trial. The divine mercy which descends on the grave of Messengers and the pious cannot be even imagined by the commoners. Yet it does not justify that prayers, supplications and other modes of worship be offered near these graves. For it leads to many evils against which Allah and His Messengers have forewarned us.

Urs

It is a worth considering point that the belief in the acceptance of supplication near graves has given rise to the practice of regular visits to certain graves. Urs is held at appointed days at certain graves. This practice is in the face of the Prophet's prohibition that his grave be not taken as place of congregation. And he had also cursed the Jews and the Christians for having turned the grave of their Messengers into places of worship. He had explicitly asked his community not to take graves as mosques, a wrong deed committed by earlier communities. Yet Urs is held at appointed dates at several graves. People assemble there exactly in the same manner as they do at Arafat, Muzdalifah and Mina. So much attention is paid to the Urs that one feels that such arrangements are not made even for Hajj. People visit these graves from far and wide, and in the same manner as for Hajj. Some people even refer to these journeys as Hajj itself.

Such a journey for making supplication or worshipping near graves cannot be held as lawful in any case. No Muslim scholar can dispute this point. Some pseudo-scholar of a later date might have justified it which is not in our knowledge. What is plainly clear is that such a practice amounts to taking graves as places of congregation.

This practice is found at the graves of Nafisar in Egypt, the supposed grave of Ali in Iraq and at those of Hussain, Hudaifah ibn al-Yaman, Salman Farsi, Moosa ibn Jafar, Muhammad ibn Ali Jawwad, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Maruf Karkhi and Abu Yazid Bistami. Those indulging in innovation have even erected mosques at these graves and some of these have been built at lands which have been illegally acquired.

Right way to love the pious

The pious persons, no doubt, deserve our love and obedience in that they have revived faith. We should undoubtedly follow them. We should make supplication for their forgiveness and that Allah's mercy and pleasure descend on them. However, we should never take their graves as places of congregation. For such practices have been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger. We must shun these. We have already explained that what is forbidden is that people assemble there at appointed time. This view is universally accepted among Muslims, without any divergence of opinion. Such practices betray an imitation of the ways of the Jews and the Christians, which is not justifiable under any circumstances.

What lies at the root of this innovation is the belief that it is better to pray near graves and that it leads to the acceptance of one's supplication. If this false belief is removed from the minds and hearts, this practice would come to an end. We consider it as our duty to reiterate the point that there are many evils in congregating near graves hence making supplications there is forbidden as is offering prayer there. But offering supplications there is much more serious in that it poses a serious trial for the Muslim community. It opens the door for polytheism. A Muslim who is concerned about his faith and about his success in the Hereafter must avoid this innovation.

CHAPTER: WORSHIP AT GRAVE

It is evident from the earlier account that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade that graves be taken as mosques and as places of congregation and that one may pray near these. He petitioned to Allah that his grave be not worshipped. What renders a grave as a place of congregation is that people visit it for worship and for gaining reward. We know the Shariah position on greeting at the graves and making supplications for the dead. We have already explained the difference between making supplication for oneself there in particular and in doing it occasionally. It is, however, in order if some discussion is made about worshipping at graves.

The same command which applies to supplication near graves holds true for worship at graves. There is nothing rewarding about remembering Allah, reciting the Qur'an, fasting, sacrificing animals and other modes of worshipping near graves. It is as undesirable to worship there as it is to make supplications there. To the best of my knowledge no scholar is on record saying that it is better to worship at graves than at other places.

Reciting the Qur'an at graves

Some people hold the view that the recitation of the Qur’an at graves brings reward for the dead. If it means that this reward can be had only when the Qur’an is recited at the grave itself, this view is not held by any reputed scholar.

There is some divergence of opinion on the point whether a physical form of worship brings some reward to the dead or not. There is no controversy about the monetary form of worship in that it is agreed by everyone that its reward does reach the dead. This position is held by Abu Hanifa, Ahmad and some scholars of Shafi'i and Maliki schools. This position is indeed sound and we have discussed it in another work. According to another group, a physical form of worship does not bring any reward to the dead. This view is held by the majority of scholars of the Shafi'i and Maliki schools. Notwithstanding this divergence, no scholar has ever held that worship only at a particular place brings reward. There is no doubt about the point that the dead listen to the recitation of the Qur’an. However, if one is dead, one cannot attain reward for an act done by someone else. One is faced with his own deeds both good and evil. Again, it is beyond doubt that if the dead person had guided someone in his lifetime, the latter's good deeds would bring reward for him. Likewise, he is benefitted from the supplications made for him.

There is some divergence of opinion on the point whether the wailing by the living incurs some punishment for the dead or not. It is reported on the authority of Imam Ahmad that the dead is hurt by the sins committed at his grave. It may be then argued that a good act there would bring happiness to the dead. Yet it does not justify the practice of the Qur'an recitation at graves. For the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not prescribe it for the Ummah.

Even if the usefulness of the above practice is proved, it cannot make it lawful. For there is more harm in it than profit. Since the dead would benefit more from one's supplication for him and from charity for his sake, it is better to do these than to recite the Qur'an at the grave. One should better perform what Shariah prescribes in that it is altogether free from any harm. Ulema, therefore, are unanimous in their view that the Qur'an should not be recited at graves. For it is certain that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not prescribe it.

There is, however, some minor difference of opinion on the recitation of Qur'an at graves absolutely. Three views on this issue are attributed to Imam Ahmad. According to the first one, there is nothing wrong in this practice. This view is shared by a group of Hanafi Ulema. It stems from Ibn Umar's directive at his death bed that the opening and concluding verses of Surah Al-Baqarah be recited at his grave after the burial. According to the second view, it is something undesirable. Those inclined to this viewpoint disapprove that Surah Al-Fatihah be recited even in the funeral prayer. Most of the disciples of Imam Ahmad have cited this statement of his, for example, his closest disciples Abd al-Wahab Warraq and Abu Bakr Muruzi, etc. Other leading jurists such as Abu Hanifah and Malik too, share this view. Imam Shafi'i does not say anything specific on this practice. For he regarded it as sheer innovation. This clarification of Imam Malik is of much importance that he was ignorant of this practice performed by the predecessors. This makes it plain that the Companions and their successessors did not follow this practice.

According to third view, there is no blame, if the Qur'an is recited only at the time of burying the dead, as is reported on Ibn Umar's authority.

Awqaf for Recitation the Qur'an

As to the Awqaf instituted by some persons for the continuous recitation of Qur'an at their graves, these do provide assistance to the practice of memorizing and teaching the Qur'an, supporting the Hafiz and serve as an incentive for memorizing and teaching the Qur'an. Even if it is conceded that the Hafiz would not get any reward for his recitation, there can be no denying the fact that such Awqaf do help and support religion as is supported by the Jihad of sinner. According to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), Allah makes even an unbeliever support His religion. This is not, however, the proper place for discussing Awqaf. Obviously it is not an undesirable practice to remember Allah near graves. What renders it as an act of innovation is to pay a visit to graves for this particular purpose. This amounts to taking graves as places of congregation. Same holds true for fasting near graves.

Charity at graves

Sacrificing animals at graves is strictly forbidden in view of the Prophet's command to this effect that it was a Jahiliyya practice that an animal was sacrificed at one's grave after his death. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) strictly forbade it. For Imam Malik it is undesirable to partake the meat of such an animal. Ulema apply the same ruling to the bread and grain which is distributed in charity at graves in our times.

Custodians of graves

Let it be known that it is forbidden to act as custodians of graves and to erect curtains at graves as in Ka'ba. As already indicated Ulema unanimously hold that it is unlawful to erect mosques at graves. If this act is coupled with innovation, it makes it all the more reprehensible. Many practitioners of innovation prefer to perform acts of devotional worship in such mosques, rather in Ka'ba.

They even hold such mosques in greater esteem than the Ka'ba, though the former have been built in contravention of the command of Allah and His Messenger. Allah asks us to remember and exalt His name in mosques built out of piety and desire to seek divine pleasure. Satan has, however, led them to indulge in polytheism as a result of their practising innovations. Many of them believe that a visit to mosques erected at the graves remember and exalt His name in mosques built out of piety and of the Prophets, their household and saints is superior to Hajj and would bring them greater reward. They even brand it as greater Hajj.

Some hold that a visit to the Prophet's grave is more valuable than performing Hajj. They therefore return from Madinah itself in the belief that they have performed a more important duty. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is, of course, superior to the Ka'ba. What these ignorant people however miserably fail to realise is that one does not worship the walls or structure of the Ka'ba itself. Rather one worships the One True Allah there. It is not lawful to visit graves for worship or offerings, one may go there, at most, for supplicating for the dead.

Invoking the dead and the absent

Many ignorant people invoke the dead and the living person who is absent, in the fashion one should call upon Allah. Some of them claim to see saints in a vision, and believe that their supplication has been answered by saints. It is indeed Satan that appears to them in disguise of the saints so in order to misguide them.

It should be clearly realised that the deceased Prophets and saints denounced such unlawful practices which are perpetrated at their graves. For example, Jesus Christ loathes the unbelief and innovation of Christians. Any Muslim should not therefore suffer from the delusion that congregation at graves is forbidden for degrading the dead, rather it is aimed at exalting them.

Domination of innovation

When the hearts become dominated by innovation, it leaves no room for guidance and following Sunnah. This point is amply supported by observation. Those given to innovations have forsaken the good deeds of those saints whose graves they worship with great zeal. Regard for a Prophet or saint does not consist in cleaning his grave and prostrating there; it lies in following their teachings which would earn them immense reward. It has been stated over and again by the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) that

«مَنْ دَعَا إِلى هُدىً كَانَ لَهُ مِنَ الأَجْرِ مِثْلَ أُجُورِ مَن تَبِعَهُ مِنْ غَيرِ أن يُنْقَصَ مِن أُجُورِهِم شَيءٌ»

one who guides others earns reward equal to them without any decrease in their reward.

Those given to error have been engrossed in acts of innovated worship-self-coined supplications, Urs and devotional songs, etc. It flows from their aversion to the worship rituals prescribed in Shariah. One who regularly prays five times and is fully cognizant of its meaning and message, cannot tum, at all, to innovation, no matter how attractive these might seem. Likewise, one who listens to the Qur'an and Hadith with full understanding derives such taste, pleasure, blessing and benefit which he cannot get elsewhere; one used to making the approved supplications at dawn, after prayers and during prostration cannot be inclined towards the invented supplications; nor can he feel the need for the same. The wise man should therefore strive to observe Sunnah in each and every respect and shun all innovation. For one who seeks good gets it and who wants to avoid evil, is saved from it.

CHAPTER: PLACE ASSOCIATED WITH MESSENGERS AND THE RIGHTEOUS

As to the places of residence, stay and worship of Prophets and the pious people, Ulema express the following two viewpoints:

The first viewpoint denotes unlawfulness regarding these places. What is meant is that one should not undertake a journey with the sole intent of worshipping at places which have not been sanctioned by Shariah. However, if Shariah prescribes a particular place for pilgrimage one should perform this duty. For example, the places where Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed such as the Prophet Ibraheem's station, mosques, standing in the first row or praying near a particular pillar in his mosque.

According to the other viewpoint, there is no blame if one occasionally visits such places. It is reported by Ibn Umar that he undertook journeys to places which the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had traversed, even if rarely. Imam Ahmad's statement is to the same effect. Ahmad Ibn Qasim relates that he asked the Imam about visiting such places in Madinah. To this he replied: "Ibn Umar used to follow in the Prophet's footsteps. He was once found dropping water at a spot for no apparent reason. When asked he told that he had observed the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) doing the same at the same spot. It is reported in the Hadith narrated by Ibn Umm Maktum that he had requested the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to offer Salat in his house so that he might take it as a place of worship. In view of these two reports it is not blameworthy to intend to undertake a journey for such places. However, much excess has been committed on this count.

Imam Ahmad has clarified the difference between moderation and excess in visiting the places associated with the Prophets and the pious persons but there are no mosques. Any excess on this count amounts to taking these as places of congregation.

Umar's reprimand

Such excess is undesirable, as is reported by Ibn Suwayd:

«خرجنا معه في حجة حجها. فقرأ بنا في الفجر : بـ ﴿ألم تر كيف فعل ربك بأصحاب الفيل﴾ و ﴿لإيلف قريش﴾ في الثانية. فلما رجع من حجته رأى الناس ابتدروا المسجد فقال: ما هذا ؟ قالوا مسجد صلى فيه رسول الله ﷺ . فقال: هكذا هلك أهل الكتاب قبلكم: اتخذوا آثار أنبيائهم بيعا. من عرضت له منكم الصلاة فيه فليصل. ومن لم تعرض له الصلاة فليمض»

"We went with Umar on pilgrimage. On the way we found people rushing to a particular spot in view of the report that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had prayed there. Umar was displeased and said: Earlier communities though blessed with the Scripture were ruined for the same reason that they had taken places associated with the Prophets as places of congregation. You must not do the same. If it is time for prayer while you pass such a spot, pray there otherwise you should move forward. Do not make it a point to pray at such spots."

The Blessed Tree

In the same vein is the report by Muhammad Ibn Wazzah and others that Umar had felled the tree under which the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had taken the oath of allegiance. For people visited it as a shrine. Umar apprehended some mischief hence he decided to cut it down altogether.

Many Ulema consider it as undesirable to visit such places. Imam Malik and other Madinan scholars therefore disapprove that mosques and particular places in Madina, other than the Quba mosque and Ohud be visited. Sufyan Thawri visited Al Aqsa mosque and prayed there but he did not go to other shrines.

Ulema condemn this practice in absolute terms in the light of Umar's above-quoted report. Moreover, this practice may give rise to taking such places for congregation and betrays conformity to the ways of the unbelievers.

Abdullah Ibn Umar's Conduct

As regards Ibn Umar's conduct, it was not the practice of any of the Companions. There is no report about the Rightly Guided Caliphs and other Companions-both Muhajir and Ansar-that they would make it a point to visit places associated with the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). It goes without saying that the conduct of the mass of Companions stands out as the model in that obedience to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) consists in following faithfully his directives and practices. If he visited a particular place for worship, it is no doubt worth visiting. However, if he prayed somewhere occasionally, without granting it a special status, visiting the same and considering it as something special cannot be taken as obedience to him.

An Important Distinction

Let us now tum to the report about Ibn Umm Maktum which is the basis of Imam Ahmad's view. He, however, maintains that such a place is not to be used for congregation, for regular visits at appointed time. What the report establishes, at most, is that Ibn Umm Maktum wanted to make it as a place of worship. He therefore requested the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to offer Salat there, which would serve as the foundation for this mosque. It is an altogether issue, vastly different from the one pertaining to places at which the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed occasionally. If necessity arises for a mosque there, it can be easily erected but not with the belief that it is a more blessed mosque. Nor can it be held that it is better to pray there than at somewhere else. One should especially pray at places so designated by the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) himself. This distinction ought to be maintained.

The former opens the door for innovation whereas the latter leads to observing Sunnah.

The Practice of the Rightly Guided Caliphs

No Companion, excepting Ibn Umar, attached importance to places where the Prophet had prayed occasionally. Abu Baler, Umar, Uthman, Ali, other Companions including both Muhajir and Ansar used to cross the same routes but did not make it a point to pray at such spots. Had there been anything rewarding about it, they would have definitely taken the lead in this regard. For they knew Sunnah best and observed it most. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«عَلَيكُمْ بِسُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعدِي ، تَمَسَّكُوا بِهَا وَعَضُّوا عَلَيهَا بِالنَّوَاجِذِ. وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَمُحْدَثَاتِ الأُمُورِ. فإنَّ كُلَّ مُحدَثَةٍ بِدْعَة وَكُلَّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ»

"Follow my Sunnah and afterwards the practice of my Rightly Guided Caliphs, and hold on to it firmly. Beware! Do not practise innovation. For everything invented is innovation. And each innovation is error."

Let it be known that the Rightly Guided Caliphs never performed such a practice. Doing so, one only practises innovation, rather than following the model of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.

Ibn Umar's view alone is not the clinching argument. For the view of a Companion is not valid if it is refuted by that of another Companion. In the case under study, Ibn Umar's is lone voice, whereas it is rejected by all other Companions. Obviously he cannot be taken as a role model on this count.

Extirpating Polytheism

Were one to pray especially at these places, it is akin to considering these as mosques. Furthermore, it betrays resemblance to the ways of polytheists. Muslims are forbidden to do either. For it might prompt one to commit polytheism. Allah and His Messenger have extirpated polytheism. This explains also why it is unlawful to pray at precisely sunset and sunrise and to take graves as places of congregation. Since it is prohibited to pray at sunset and sunrise and near graves only to prevent the means to polytheism, it can be never desirable to make supplication and prayer especially at the places where the Prophets and pious persons have occasionally performed the devotional acts. The same ruling would apply to several other places associated with the Prophets. For example, the places in Damascus associated with Prophets Ibrahim and Jesus (Peace be upon them), the cave linked with Cain and Abel and numerous similar spots in Arabia, Syria and other countries.

It would invariably lead to disaster. Everyone would be asked to pray here and there in view of unauthentic reports about their association with Prophets, saints and martyrs. Even dreams would be cited in support of such claims. Gradually these places would tum into idols with polytheism gaining ground -the polytheism which is ever based on falsehood.

Falsehood-basis of polytheism

The very superstructure of polytheism is erected on falsehood. Allah therefore speaks of the two, polytheism and falsehood, together in the Qur'an. In contrast, truth and monotheism are presented as twin concepts. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) repeated the point twice that false witness is equivalent to ascribing partners to Allah and recited the following Qur'anic verse:

﴿فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ ﴿٣٠﴾ حُنَفَاءَ لِلَّهِ غَيْرَ مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِ﴾

"So shun the abomination of idols, and shun lying speech, being true in faith to Allah, and never assigning partners to Him (Al-Hajj, 22:30-31)."

Allah says:

﴿وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَائِيَ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَنَزَعْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا فَقُلْنَا هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ فَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ الْحَقَّ لِلَّهِ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾﴾

The Day He will call on them. He will say: 'Where are My partners whom you used to assert? And from each people We shall take out a witness and We shall say: 'Bring your proof'. Then shall they know that the Truth is with Allah alone, and the lies which they invented will disappear from them (Al-Qasas, 28:74-75).

Relating the story of Prophet Ibraheem (Peace be upon him) it is stated:

﴿إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَاذَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ أَئِفْكًا آلِهَةً دُونَ اللَّهِ تُرِيدُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾﴾

When he said to his father and his people: 'What is that which you worship? Is it a falsehood-gods other than Allah that you seek?' (Al-Saffat, 37:85-86).

It is further said:

﴿تَنزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ (١) إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَّهُ الدِّينَ (٢) أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِي مَا هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ﴾

The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. Verily We have sent down the Book to you in truth. So worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion. Is it not to Allah that sincere devotion is due? But those who take for protectors others than Allah say: 'We only serve them in order that they may bring us near to Allah. Truly Allah will judge between them in that wherein they differ (Al-Zumar, 39:1-3).

﴿وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا مَكَانَكُمْ أَنتُمْ وَشُرَكَاؤُكُمْ ۚ فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ وَقَالَ شُرَكَاؤُهُم مَّا كُنتُمْ إِيَّانَا تَعْبُدُونَ (٢٨) فَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ إِن كُنَّا عَنْ عِبَادَتِكُمْ لَغَافِلِينَ (٢٩) هُنَالِكَ تَبْلُو كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا أَسْلَفَتْ ۚ وَرُدُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقِّ ۖ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ (٣٠)﴾

And the Day whereon We shall gather them all together, then We shall say to those who did set partners in worship with Us: "Stop at your place! You and you partners (whom you had worshipped in the worldly life)." Then We shall separate them, and their (Allah's so-called) partners shall say: "It was not us that you used to worship." "So sufficient is Allah for a witness between us and you, that We indeed knew nothing of your worship of us." (Yunus, 10:28-30).

﴿أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَن فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ ۚ إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ (٦٦)﴾

Behold! Verily to Allah belong whoever is in the heavens and whoever is in the earth. What do they follow who worship as His partners other than Allah? They follow nothing but conjecture, and they only invent lie! (Yunus, 10:66).

Allah's Wrath on the Practitioners of Innovation

While explicating the import of above verses Abu Qalaba states that each practitioner of innovation among this Ummah would suffer this fate on the Day of Judgement. His observation is absolutely right. Allah's wrath overwhelms those given to lies and falsehood. Polytheism and all innovations issue from falsehood. The farther one is away from monotheism and Sunnah, the closer he is to polytheism, falsehood and innovation. Rawafidh are worse than all other sects being given to falsehood and polytheism. No other sect is so deeply engrossed in the above evils. They are guilty of corrupting and despoiling mosques meant for remembering Allah. Hardly do they take any step to establish Juma or congregational prayers there. Yet they are very particular about visiting shrines erected on graves, though it is expressly forbidden by Allah and His Messenger.

Mosques or Shrines

Allah instructs Muslims in the Qur'an to frequent mosques, not shrines.

﴿ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن مَّنَعَ مَسَـٰجِدَ ٱللَّهِ أَن يُذْكَرَ فِيهَا ٱسْمُهُۥ وَسَعَىٰ فِى خَرَابِهَآ ﴾

And who is more unjust than he who forbids that Allah's Name be glorified and mentioned much in Allah's Mosques and strives for their ruin? (Al-Baqarah, 2:114).

Allah says:

﴿ مَا كَانَ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ أَن يَعْمُرُوا۟ مَسَـٰجِدَ ٱللَّهِ شَـٰهِدِينَ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِهِم بِٱلْكُفْرِ ۚ
أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَـٰلُهُمْ وَفِى ٱلنَّارِ هُمْ خَـٰلِدُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَـٰجِدَ ٱللَّهِ
مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْـَٔاخِرِ وَأَقَامَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتَى ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا
ٱللَّهَ ۖ فَعَسَىٰٓ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ أَن يَكُونُوا۟ مِنَ ٱلْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ ﴾

It is not for polytheists to visit or maintain the mosques of Allah while they witness against their own souls to infidelity. The works of such are in vain: in Fire they shall abide. The mosques of Allah shall be maintained only by those who believe in Allah, and the Last Day, establish regular prayers, pay Zakah and fear no one at all except Allah. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance (AlTawbah, 9:17-18).

The Qur'an specifically uses the term mosques, rather than shrines, in all these instances.

Only such people visit shrines who fear more other persons than Allah, repose faith in them and practise polytheism in varying degrees. Allah says:

﴿ وَأَنَّ ٱلْمَسَـٰجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا۟ مَعَ ٱللَّهِ أَحَدًا ﴿١٨﴾ ﴾

"Mosques are for Allah hence no one be associated with Him in invocation" (Al-Jinn, 72:18).

Sunnah illustrates the point further. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«مَن بَنَى لِلهِ مَسْجِداً بَنَى اللهُ لَه بَيتاً فِي الجَنَّةِ»

"One who builds a mosque for Allah, gets a house built for him by Allah in Paradise."

Many similar Ahadith prove it beyond doubt that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) always directed that mosques be built and visited. He never referred to shrines. Nor did he ask that supplications be offered at the graves of Prophets or at any other spot. In the days of the Companions and their successors no mosque was erected at graves across the entire Islamic lands and there was no shrine anywhere. No one among the Companions or early Muslims especially visited the Prophet's grave for making supplications. On the way to the Prophet's mosque they would, at most, greet him and also Abu Bakr and Umar.

Imam Malik and the greetings at the Prophet's grave

According to Imam Malik, one should not even stand near the Prophet's grave, rather one should immediately leave the place after having made greetings. It is recorded in his Mabsut that a traveller may stay at the Prophet's grave, send blessings, and pray for Umar and Abu Bakr. Someone pointed out that there were persons, who without having undertaken a journey, visit the Prophet's grave once or more in a day and engage in supplication for long. To this Imam Malik replied: "I do not have any report about such conduct. The Ummah can derive the best only by following in the footsteps of early Muslims. And I am not aware of such a practice by early Muslims."

Imam Malik versus 'ziyarah' (visiting a sacred place)

Imam Malik is so sensitive to this issue that he does not like to use the expression "Ziyarah" (visiting a sacred place) with reference to the Prophet's grave. He forbade people employing this expression. He did not like to associate a grave with this concept. For it smacks of imitating the People of the Book who turned graves into places of worship.

In terminology of the most of the people, the expression 'Ziyarah' has been particularised for visiting graves connoting innovation and polytheism. They use it with pointed reference to visiting graves of Prophets and saints. It is not used for visiting common graves. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) never asked that a particular grave be visited. No hadith to this effect figures in any Hadith collection. Only some fabricated reports exist.

Fabricated Hadith

Some of the relevant fabricated hadith on this count are: "One who visits my grave and of Ibraheem (Peace be upon him) within a year would secure my surety for entry to Paradise." "One visiting my grave is like the one who met me in my lifetime." He is a wrongdoer who performs Hajj yet fails to visit my grave." Such reports and alike ascribed to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) represent lie against him.

Notwithstanding this prohibition the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) later permitted that one may visit graves. In Sahih Al-Bukhari is recorded his saying:

«كُنتُ نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْ زِيَارَةِ القُبُورِ فَزُورُوهَا»

"I had forbidden you visiting graves. Now onwards you may, however, visit these."

This Hadith further relates:

«اسْتَأْذَنْتُ رَبِّي فِي أَنْ أَسْتَغْفِرَ لأُمِّي فَلَمْ يَأْذَنْ لِي . وَاسْتَأْذَنْتُهُ فِي أَنْ أَزُورَ قَبْرَهَا فَأَذِنَ لِي فَزُورُوا القُبُورَ فَإِنَّهَا تُذَكِّرُكُمُ الآخِرَةَ»

"I sought my Lord's leave to make supplication for my mother's forgiveness, which was refused. When I asked for visiting her grave, I was allowed to do so. You may, therefore, visit graves, for these would remind you of the Hereafter."

Since a visit with this intention serves as a reminder for the Hereafter, one may visit even an unbeliever's grave for this purpose.

Ibn Umar's Objective

We have yet discussed the issue of offering prayers near graves and treating these as mosques. It has become clear beyond doubt that no one among the early Muslims practised either. It is, however, said about Ibn Umar that he made it a point to pray at the same spots where the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had ever prayed. Once the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) while making Wuzu at a particular spot had watered some plants there. Ibn Umar did exactly the same. So doing, he intended only to follow the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) in all respects. He did not do so out of any belief in the sacredness of such places. Nor did he make supplications there with this intention.

Worship at places associated with the Prophets

Three points need to be addressed here:

1. There is divergence of opinion on the point to follow the external forms of all the acts of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) without finding out his intention and objective. Ibn Umar and the like held one viewpoint while others differed from it. The general practice of both Muhajireen and Ansar was contrary to that of Ibn Umar. This particular issue, however, lies outside the scope of the present work. To the same category falls the point whether a traveller may dismount and pray at the spot where the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had prayed, if it is time for prayer.

2. As to the point whether a traveller should make it a point to dismount there, even if it is not time for prayer. This view was held by neither Ibn Umar, nor any other Companion. On the contrary, Ibn Umar's father is on record prohibiting this practice. Even if it is proved that Ibn Umar held such a view, it does not and cannot function as the norm.

3. If that particular spot is not even on the way yet the traveller takes a specific journey to it with the aim of offering prayers and supplications there, this point needs our attention. For some persons are found travelling specifically to the caves of Hira and Thawr and the mount Tur. It is definitely established that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions never did so. In the days of Jahiliyah (PreIslamic Period) the Quraysh used to visit the Hira mount for worship and the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) followed the same practice in his pre-Prophetic days. The first revelation was sent down to him in the Hira cave. However, after assuming the office of prophethood he never visited it again, nor did the Companions, the best among Muslims. This happened notwithstanding the fact that he and his Companions

stayed in Makka for thirteen years after Islam. Then they migrated to Madina and visited Makka several times. Later on, none of the Rightly Guided Caliphs or other early Muslims ever visited the Hira cave or any other such place for supplication.

Moreover, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not build any mosque in Makkah, other than the Sacred Mosque. All mosques in Makkah were built at a later date, including the Mawlid mosque. Nor did he command that his place of birth be visited or one go to the place where the Aqaba pledge was undertaken. Had it been part of Shariah, he would have been the first to point it out; His Companions would have followed this practice first. Since nothing is on record about such conduct of theirs, we know it as innovation. One who regards it as part of worship ritual, he acts contrary to their way and invents something in religion which Allah has not prescribed.

Since this is the position regarding the places associated with Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) as the Hira cave in which the revelation was sent down to him first, or the Thawr cave mentioned in the Qur'an, where divine tranquility overtook him, one can imagine well the status of places associated with other Messengers. Visiting these for worship and supplication becomes all the more contrary to Shariah. This holds true for places which are authentically related to the Messengers. The act becomes all the more reprehensible in relation to places which are made out to be associated with the Messenger.

Kissing a particular spot

To perform masah (wiping) or kissing a particular spot for gaining some blessings falls into the same category of undesirable acts. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not kiss any part of the Ka'ba other than the Black Stone. He did not kiss the Station of Ibraheem (Peace be upon him). Since this is the case, it is not lawful to kiss the footstep of the Prophet or a particular person. Many ignorant people have stones with footprints and make people reverence it by spreading the false report that it is the imprint of the Prophet's footstep. Even if it is a genuine one, it is not justified to kiss it. And such an act is out of the question, if it is a fake one.

Station of Ibraheem (Peace be upon him) and other spots

As to the argument that Allah has asked that prayers be offered at the Station of Ibraheem (Peace be upon him), hence other such spots be treated likewise, it should be realised that the divine command is exclusively about the Station of Ibraheem (Peace be upon him) whether stationed near Ka'ba or at Arafah, Muzdalifah, or Mina. All the Muslims are unanimous at this point that no other place shares the specific rituals fixed for these emblems. For example, Tawaf (circumambulation) is specific to the Ka'bah; one cannot make Tawaf of other places. The rituals prescribed for and at certain spots cannot be generalized or extended in relation to other spots. But contrary to it, the special status not conferred on these places can also not be applied to others. Our argument is that since kissing and wiping of even these emblems are not approved by Shariah, those acts for all other spots are all the more against it. But contrary to it, the rituals specifically approved for these spots are also not lawful for other places.

As a matter of fact, one may undertake a journey specially for only three mosques-the Sacred Mosque in Makka, Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem and the Prophet's mosque in Madina. One should visit only these three mosques for the performance of devotional worship such as prayers, supplication, Allah's rembrance, reciting the Qur’an and devotional retreat, etc. According to the consensus of Ulema, one should not undertake a journey for visiting any other mosque excepting these three.

CHAPTER: AL-AQSA MOSQUE

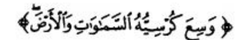
Al-Asqa Mosque is one of the three mosques for which it is lawful to undertake a journey for its visit. When Umar visited Jerusalem, he observed a pile of rubbish at Sakhra which the Christians had heaped out of spite for the Jews. For the latter held it in esteem and took it as the direction of their prayer. Umar cleaned the spot and he was joined by other Muslims in this operation. It is said that he hired labour for the same. Anyway, he built a mosque there.

Nonetheless, Al-Aqsa mosque cannot be called 'Haram'; only the mosques in Makkah and Madina deserve this appellation. Moreover, it should be realised that only the al-Aqsa mosque enjoys sanctity, not the Sakhara itself. Umar and other Companions did not say prayers near the Sakhara. Nor did they touch or kiss it. The mosques Al-Ka'ba and Al-Nabwi are by consensus superior to the Al-Aqsa mosque. Furthermore, except the Black Stone, there is nothing in these mosques which may be touched or kissed for blessing. Hence the Al-Aqsa mosque has nothing which makes it superior to the two mosques in Makkah and Madina.

Construction at the Sakhara

There was no structure there. None of the Companions, the authorities, and the Ulema made it exclusive to the worship. It stood under open sky upto the period of Rightly Guided Caliphs, Muawiyah, Yazid, and Muawiyah bin Yazid. Then Abd alMalik Marwan assumed the rulership; Abdullah ibn Abu Zubair enjoyed much popularity in the day. People visited Makkah for Hajj and turned into the supporters of Abdullah ibn Abu Zubair. For discouraging people from visiting Makkah in order to lessen the supporters of Abdullah, Abd al-Malik got a structure built at the Sakhara, got it covered with curtains which hung there always.

Since then Muslims have developed great regard for the Sakhara and Bait al-Maqdis. Some have drawn on even the Israelite reports in circulating stories about its exalted position. Even it is narrated that it was related by Ka'ab Ahbar in Abd al-Malik's court that Allah had told the Sakhara: "You are my lower Throne." Urwah ibn alZubair, who was present there, called into question the import of this statement on the ground that Allah Himself says in the Qur’an:



"Allah's throne extends over the heavens and the earth" (Al-Baqarah, 2:255)

hence the Throne cannot be at the Sakhara.

Ka'ab Ahbar's lie

Some persons have written books describing the excellence of Bait al-Maqdis and other places, which are based on the reports popular among the People of the Book. In matters of faith Muslim cannot, however, rely on these reports. Among the narrators of such reports, Ka'ab Ahbar is the most outstanding one. Syrians have taken many Israelite reports. Regarding Ka'ab Ahbar, Muawiya said: "We did not come across anyone more authentic than Ka'ab about the Israelite reports, though sometimes lies are also found in his reports.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) advised: "You should not reject or accept the reports of the People of the Book. For you may endorse some falsehood of theirs or you may reject some truth spoken by them."

The infallible Muslim Ummah cannot ever agree on some error. Islamic Shariah has been miraculously preserved. Ulema hesitate to accept even mursal Hadith (Hadith transmitted without the link of a Companion and narrated on the direct authority of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) reported by such leading successors as Ata Ibn Riyah, Hasan Basri and Abu al-Aliya. Some Ulema reject mursal hadith altogether, others accept these contingent upon certain conditions. This attitude is regarding those who have one, two or, at most, three links between them and the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). As to mursal hadith cited in several works, these should not be taken into account without consulting Ulema. What needs to be ascertained is whether these have been transmitted by reliable narrators.

It is well-known that the Companions and the successors vastly extended the house of Islam after the Prophet's demise and settled in Syria, Iraq and Egypt. Obviously they were much more knowledgeable about religion than members of the later generations. And they were more observant of faith. Yet they never

reverenced such places which are held in much esteem today. Possibly some pious persons might have, at a later date, paid tribute to these places. However, Muslims should better follow the model of the Companions and the successors and not of the others.

False reports about the Prophet's Miraj (the Ascension)

According to the Sahih Al-Bukhari, when the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) visited Jerusalem as part of Miraj, he offered there two rakahs of prayer. He did not do so anywhere else. Nor did he visit any other place. Some of the reports about Miraj are authentic while others are unreliable. An example of the unreliable reports is that Jibrail told the Prophet: "Here is the grave of Ibraheem, your forefather. Get down and pray here." Strangely enough, these reports state that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was dismounted likewise in Madinah and he prayed at the site of his mosque. Actually there was then no mosque there, rather a tomb built by the polytheists stood there. At the time of Hijrah (his migration from Makkah to Madina) the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) descended there in that the she-camel had sat down there. This and other such reports are merely a pack of lies in the opinion of all Ulema.

Ibraheem's grave

There is a church at Bethlehem and there is no blessing for a Muslim in visiting it, no matter whether it marks the birthplace of Prophet Jesus (Peace be upon him) or not. The Companions and the successors never visited even Ibraheem's grave for offering prayers and supplications there. Many companions had accompanied Umar and many other settled down in Syria yet none of them performed any of the above practices. At the end of the fourth century H the Christians took hold of Jerusalem in that Syria and Egypt were then under the control of the Rawafid, who are devoid of sound mind, sound faith and wisdom. Little wonder then that the Christians overwhelmed them. By breaking into Ibraheem's apartment they opened a door there, which since then has been a place of worship. It was thus a practice initiated by the Christians, which has nothing to do with the early pious Muslims or the elites of the Ummah.

CHAPTER: COMMAND REGARDING MOSQUES

It is an article of Islamic faith that no place other than mosques be visited for worship. The polytheists and the people of the Book, no doubt, had many shrines and worshipped them. Islam, however, called upon the extirpation of such practices.

All mosques are for worship alone and each one serves this purpose equally well. The only exception is the Sacred Mosque in Makkah, where one performs Tawaf. It has certain features which are not shared by other mosques. One of its outstanding features is that it is the direction of prayer. As it is, no mosque can match this.

The Prophet's Mosque

As to the Prophet's and Al-Aqsa mosques, one may worship there exactly in the same fashion one may do at any other mosque. Practices such as wiping and kissing which are not lawful there, are also unlawful in others. Yet these two mosques are more exalted than others and fetch one greater reward. The following Hadith is on record about the Prophet's mosque:

«إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ فِيهِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ أَلْفِ صَلَاةٍ فِيمَا سِوَاهُ إِلا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ»

"A single prayer offered in my mosque is more rewarding than 1000 prayers in other mosques excepting the Sacred Mosque."

It is related by Abdullah ibn Abbas and recorded in Sahih Muslim:

«إِنَّ آمْرَأَةً اشْتَكَتْ شَكْوَى. فَقَالَتْ: إِنْ شَفَانِيَ اللهُ لأَخْرُجَنَّ فَلأُصَلِّيَنَّ فِي بَيْتِ الْمَقْدِسِ. فَبَرَأَتْ. ثُمَّ تَجَهَّزَتْ تُرِيدُ الْخُرُوجَ. فَجَاءَتْ مَيْمُونَةَ زَوجَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَأَخْبَرَتْهَا بِذَلِكَ.. فَقَالَتْ: آجْلِسِي ، فَكُلِي مَا صَنَعْتِ ، وَصَلِّي فِي مَسْجِدِ الرَّسُول. فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: صَلَاةٌ فِيهِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ أَلْفِ صَلَاةٍ فِيمَا سِوَاهُ إِلا مَسْجِدَ الْكَعْبَةِ»

"A woman fell ill and she vowed to pray in Al-Aqsa mosque when she recovers. After the recovery she was ready for this journey and went to say farewell to Maimoona, the Prophet's wife. She told her: "Have food and then pray in the Prophet's mosque, for I heard him saying: 'Prayer offered in my mosque, in comparison to the one in other mosques, is 1000 times better. It is next only to the Sacred Mosque."

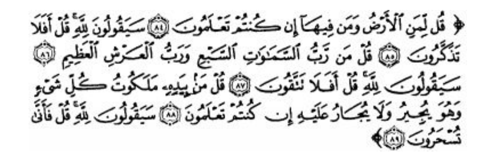
«صَلَاةٌ فِي مَسْجِدِي هذَا أَفْضَلُ مِنْ أَلْفِ صَلَاةٍ فِيمَا سِوَاهُ إِلا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ.
وَصَلَاةٌ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ صَلَاةٍ فِي مَسْجِدِي بِمِائَةِ صَلَاةٍ»

"On the authority of Abdullah ibn Zubair it is reported in Musnad Ahmad that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Prayer in my mosque is 1000 times better than in any other

mosque excepting the Sacred Mosque. And a single prayer in the Sacred Mosque, Makkah is 100 times better than the one performed in my mosque."

Itikaf (Devotional Retreat)

Shariah commands that Itikaf be offered in mosque, not in some cave which was common in the days of Jahiliyah. This mode of worship can, however, be performed only in mosque. To do so at a tree, stone, grave or any other supposedly blessed spot, is part of the polytheists' faith, not of Muslims. Muslims perform 1tikaf in mosque for worshipping Allah alone Who does not have a partner, whereas polytheists do so for serving false gods whom they fear, invoke and take as intercessors and partners. No polytheist ever believed that there were two creators of the universe or a god equalled the One True God; rather they too held that the heavens and the earth were created by a single deity. Allah states this belief of theirs thus:



Say: "Whose is the earth and whosoever is therein? If you know!" They will say: "It is Allah's!" Say: "Will you not then remember?" Say: "Who is (the) Lord of the seven heavens, and (the) Lord of the Great Throne?" They will say: "Allah." Say: "Will you not then fear Allah (believe in His Oneness, obey Him, believe in the Resurrection and Recompense for each and every good or bad deed)." Say "In Whose Hand is the sovereignty of everything (i.e. treasures of each and everything)? And He protects (all), while against Whom there is no protector, (i.e. if Allah saves anyone none can punish or harm him, and if Allah punishes or harms anyone none can save him), if you know." They will say: "(All that belongs) to Allah." Say: "How then are you deceived and tum away from the truth?" (Surah AlMuminoon, 23:84-89)

While performing pilgrimage and chanting 'talbiya' the polytheists would say:

«لَبَّيْكَ لاَ شَرِيْكَ لَكَ إِلا شَرِيكاً هُوَ لَكَ ، تَمْلِكُهُ وَمَا مَلَكَ»

"You have no partner except one, of whom and of whose possession You are also the Lord."

Means of access for the polytheists

However, they regarded their gods as the means and link who would bring them closer to the One True God and act as their intercessor. Allah says:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ
زُلْفَىٰ﴾

And those who take 'Auliya' (protectors and helpers) besides Him (say): "We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allah (Surah Al-Zumar, 39:3)."

﴿أَمِ اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاءَ قُلْ أَوَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾
قُل لِّلَّهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ جَمِيعًا لَّهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ﴾

Have they taken others as intercessors besides Allah? Say: "Even if they have power over nothing whatever and have no intelligence?" Say: "To Allah belongs all intercession. His is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, then to Him you shall be brought back." (Surah AlZumar, 39:43-44).

﴿وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَٰؤُلَاءِ
شُفَعَاؤُنَا عِندَ اللَّهِ قُلْ أَتُنَبِّئُونَ اللَّهَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٨﴾﴾

And they worship besides Allah things that hurt them not, nor profit them, and they say: "These are our intercessors with Allah." Say: "Do you inform Allah of that which He knows not in the heavens and on the earth?" Glorified and Exalted be He above all that which they associate as partners with Him! (Surah Yunus, 10:18)

﴿ وَمَا لِيَ لَآ أَعْبُدُ ٱلَّذِى فَطَرَنِى وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ ءَأَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ ءَالِهَةً إِن
يُرِدْنِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ بِضُرٍّ لَّا تُغْنِ عَنِّى شَفَٰعَتُهُمْ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يُنقِذُونِ ﴿٢٣﴾ إِنِّىٓ إِذًا لَّفِى
ضَلَٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنِّىٓ ءَامَنتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ فَٱسْمَعُونِ ﴿٢٥﴾ ﴾

"And why should I not worship Him (Allah Alone) Who has created me and to Whom you shall be returned. "Shall I take besides Him aliha (gods), if the Most Beneficent (Allah) intends me any harm, their intercession will be of no use for me whatsoever, nor can they save me? "Then verily, I should be in plain error. "Verily! I have believed in your Lord, so listen to me!" (Surah Ya Sin, 36:22-25)

﴿ وَأَنذِرْ بِهِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَن يُحْشَرُوٓا۟ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ ۙ لَيْسَ لَهُم مِّن دُونِهِۦ وَلِىٌّ وَلَا
شَفِيعٌ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ ﴾

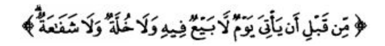
And warn therewith (the Qur'an) those who fear that they will be gathered before their Lord, when there will be neither a protector nor an intercessor for them besides Him, so that they may fear Allah and keep their duty to Him. (Surah Al-An'am, 6:51).

CHAPTER: INTERCESSION

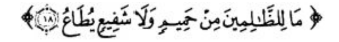
Those believing in intercession belong mainly to these three groups:

1. Polytheists and practitioners of innovation both among the People of the Book and Muslims hold such a view of intercession which the Qur’an refutes.

2. Khawarij and Mutazilites deny the Prophet's intercession for those guilty of major sins. Some erroneous sects do not subscribe to the belief in intercession and supplication. They try to derive this position from the Qur'an, for example, on the basis of the following verses:



A Day comes when there will be no bargaining, no friendship, no intercession (Al-Baqarah, 2:254).



There will be no friend, nor an intercessor for the wrong doers, who could be given heed to (Ghafir, 40:18).

3. The pious early Muslims, religious figures, the Ulema following them and the community devoted to Sunnah believe in the idea of intercession in view of Ahadith. For them, not only Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) but also other Messengers and angels would intercede. Moreover, they hold that no monotheist would be consigned to hell for ever. Again, in view of Ahadith they believe that one benefits from another's intercession and supplication. For the intercessor would invoke Allah in that no intercession can be of any avail without His leave.

﴿مَن ذَا ٱلَّذِي يَشۡفَعُ عِندَهُۥٓ إِلَّا بِإِذۡنِهِۦۚ﴾

Who is he that can intercede with Him except without His permission? (Al-Baqarah, 2:255).

﴿وَلَا يَشۡفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ ٱرۡتَضَىٰ﴾

They cannot intercede except for him with whom Allah is pleased (Al-Anbiya, 21:28).

﴿۞وَكَم مِّن مَّلَكٖ فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ لَا تُغۡنِي شَفَٰعَتُهُمۡ شَيۡـًٔا إِلَّا مِنۢ بَعۡدِ أَن يَأۡذَنَ ٱللَّهُ لِمَن يَشَآءُ وَيَرۡضَىٰٓ ٢٦﴾

And there are many angels in the heavens, whose intercession will avail nothing except after Allah has given leave for whom He wills and pleases (Al-Najm, 53:26).

We know from Hadith that on the Day of Judgement people would approach Prophets Adam, Noah, Ibraheem, Musa and Isa for intercession but they would refer them to Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) who has been forgiven all his sins. Then he would appear before Allah and would prostrate himself on witnessing His effulgence. He would praise Allah in the manner taught to him then. It is not known now. Then Allah would ask him to raise his head and make his petition in that his intercession would be accepted. On being granted this leave he would seek the pardon of his nation (Ummah). Allah would put a ceiling on it, and all those within it would qualify for entry into Paradise. Allah says:

﴿قُلِ ٱدۡعُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ زَعَمۡتُم مِّن دُونِهِۦ فَلَا يَمۡلِكُونَ كَشۡفَ ٱلضُّرِّ عَنكُمۡ وَلَا تَحۡوِيلًا ٥٦ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَدۡعُونَ يَبۡتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ ٱلۡوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمۡ أَقۡرَبُ وَيَرۡجُونَ رَحۡمَتَهُۥ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُۥٓۚ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحۡذُورٗا ٥٧﴾

Say (O Muhammad Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). "Call unto those besides Him-whom you pretend (to be gods like angels, Messiah, Ezra etc.). They have neither the power to remove the adversity from you nor even to shift it from you to another person. "Those whom they call upon (like Jesus-son of Mary, Ezra, angels, etc.) desire (for themselves) means of access to their Lord (Allah), as to (Allah), as to which of them should be the nearest and they (Jesus, Ezra, angels, etc.) hope for His Mercy and fear His Torment. Verily, the Torment of your Lord is something to be afraid of! (Al-Isra, 17:56-57).

A group of early Muslims interpret the above-quoted verses as to the invocation to Ezra, Jesus and angels by Jews. Allah, therefore, tells that even those deities stand in need of gaining access to Allah, seek His mercy and fear His penalty.

Who deserves intercession most

According to a report in Sahib Bukhari,

أنَّ أبَا هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: ((يارَسُولَ اللهِ ، أيُّ النّاسِ أسْعَدُ بشَفَاعَتِك يَـومَ القِيَامـةِ؟
قَالَ: ياأبَا هُرَيْرَةَ ، لَقَـدْ ظَنَنْـتُ أن لاَ يَسْـألَنِي عَـنْ هـذا الحَدِيـثِ أحَـدٌ أولى
مِنْكَ، لِمَا رَأيتُ مِنْ حِرْصِكَ عَلَـى الْحَدِيـثِ. أسْـعَدُ النّـاسِ بِشَـفَاعَتِي يَـومَ
القِيَامَةِ: مَنْ قَالَ لاَ إله إلا اللهُ ، يَبْتَغِي بهَا وَجْهَ اللهِ))

"Abu Hurairah asked: a Messenger of Allah! Who would benefit most on the Day of Judgement from you intercession?' He replied: 'The most fortunate person on this count would be the one who utters this with utmost sincerity: 'There is no god besides Allah' and seeks with it Allah's pleasure."

So the more sincerely one recites this credal statement, the more deserving he would be for intercession. However, one reposing faith in some fellow creature, looking forward to him and fearing him would have no share in the intercession.

When one approaches someone for recommending the case of another he does not take prior permission to do so. Rather, one does in the belief that the person approached being indebted to him would consider favourably the recommendation. However, Allah is above everyone being the Master and Ruler of everyone hence one cannot intercede with Him without His prior leave.

He Himself grants someone this privilege and accepts his intercession. This is akin to the process of supplication in that He prompts one to ask for something and then grants the same. This prerogative rests solely with Allah.

It is worth reflecting that the one taken by someone as his intercessor may decline to do so or be forbidden by Allah to do so or his request be turned down. The most exalted human beings are Prophets Muhammad and Ibraheem (Peace be upon them). Yet

Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) ceased to supplicate for his dear uncle Abu Talib, notwithstanding his earlier statement that he would seek forgiveness for him unless forbidden from it.

The Prophet's Supplication

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), no doubt, offered funeral prayer for some hypocrites and prayed for their forgiveness but he was forbidden to do so by Allah:

﴿ وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلَىٰٓ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُم مَّاتَ أَبَدًا وَلَا تَقُمْ عَلَىٰ قَبْرِهِۦٓ ﴾

And never (O Muhammad) pray funeral prayer for any of them (hypocrites) who dies, nor stand at his grave (AlTawbah, 9:84).

﴿ ٱسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ أَوْ لَا تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ إِن تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً فَلَن يَغْفِرَ ٱللَّهُ لَهُمْ ﴾

Whether you ask forgiveness for them or ask not forgiveness for them, and even if you ask seventy times for their forgiveness for them, Allah would not forgive them (Al-Tawbah, 9:80).

After this revelation the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) remarked:

«لَو أَعْلَمُ أَنِّي لَو زِدْتُ عَلَى السَّبْعِينَ يُغْفَرُ لَهُمْ لَزِدْتُ»

'Were I to know that they would be forgiven if I had asked more than seventy times for their forgiveness, I would have done so.'

Subsequently the following verse was revealed:

﴿ سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَسْتَغْفَرْتَ لَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ لَن يَغْفِرَ ٱللَّهُ لَهُمْ ﴾

It is equal to them whether you pray for their forgiveness or not. Allah will not forgive them (Al-Munafiqun, 63:6).

Let us now turn our attention to Prophet Ibraheem's story. He had promised his father that he would ask for his forgiveness. However,

when he realised that the latter was Allah's enemy, he recanted his earlier stance, as the Qur’an recounts:

﴿ مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا أَن يَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوٓا أُولِي
قُرْبَىٰ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَٰبُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَمَا كَانَ
اسْتِغْفَارُ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَن مَّوْعِدَةٍ وَعَدَهَآ إِيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُۥٓ أَنَّهُۥ
عَدُوٌّ لِّلَّهِ تَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُ ﴾

It is not proper for the Prophet and the believers to ask Allah's forgiveness for those who associate others with Allah in His divinity, even though they be of kin, after it has become clear to them that they are dwellers of Fire. And Ibraheem's invoking of Allah for his father's forgiveness was only because of a promise he had made to him. But when it became clear to him that he was an emey to Allah, he disassociated himself from him (Al-Tawbah, 9:113-114).

CHAPTER: RIGHTS OF ALLAH AND OF FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS

Allah has certain rights upon His slaves in which He does not want that others be associated. There are rights of Messengers which are also not to be shared by others. On the authority of Muazdh ibn Jabl it is recorded in Al-Bukhari and Muslim:

«كُنْتُ رَدِيفَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَقَالَ لِي: يَامُعَاذُ ؟ أَتَدْرِي مَا حَقُّ اللهِ عَلَى العِبَادِ؟ قُلْتُ: اللهُ وَرَسُولُه أعلَمُ. قَالَ: حَقُّهُ عَلَيهِمْ : أَن يَعْبُدُوه ولا يُشْرِكُوا به شَيئاً. يَامُعَاذُ ، أَتَدْرِي مَا حَقُّ العِبَادِ عَلَى اللهِ إِذَا فَعَلُوا ذلِكَ؟ قُلْتُ: اللهُ ورَسُولُه أعلَمُ. قَالَ: حَقُّهُم عَلَيهِ: أَنْ لا يُعَذِّبَهُمْ»

I was seated behind the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) on a camel. He asked me: Do you know what obligations man owes to Allah?" I replied: 'Allah and His Messenger know it better'. He continued: 'Man owes it to Allah that he should worship no one other than Him and not take any as partner with Him'. He then enquired me about the rights of man upon Allah. When I replied that Allah and His Messenger are better informed, he said: 'The right of man is that Allah would not afflict him with penalty.'"

Allah therefore deserves to be worshipped without any partner ascribed to Him. This constitutes real monotheism, the message of all His Messengers and Scriptures. Allah says:

﴿وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِىٓ إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُۥ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنَا۠ فَٱعْبُدُونِ ﴿٢٥﴾﴾

We did not send any Messenger before you (O Muhammad) but We inspired him saying: 'There is none to be worshipped but Allah, so worship Allah alone (AlAnbiya, 21:25).

﴿ وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ ﴾

And verily We have sent among every community a Messenger (proclaiming): 'Worship Allah and avoid false deities' (Al-Nahl, 16:36).

Another obligation is that man should fear none other than Allah:

﴿ وَمَن يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَخْشَ اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقْهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ ﴾

And who obeys Allah and His Messenger, fears Allah, and keeps his duty to Him, such is successful (Al-Nur, 24:52).

While obedience is due to both Allah and His Messenger, Allah alone is to be feared. The Qur'an says:

﴿ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوا مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ سَيُؤْتِينَا
اللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ وَرَسُولُهُ إِنَّا إِلَى اللَّهِ رَاغِبُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ ﴾

Would that they were content with what Allah and His Messenger gave them and had said: Allah is sufficient for us. Allah will give us of His bounty and His Messenger. We implore Allah (to enrich us) (Al-Tawbah, 9:59).

In the above verse, once again, obedience to both Allah and His Messenger is stated as an obligation. This idea recurs in all relevant verses:

﴿ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانتَهُوا ﴾

And take whatever the Messenger gives and abstain from whatever he forbids (Al-Hashr, 59:7).

Thus the lawful and the unlawful are those designated so by the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). So is faith what

is prescribed by him. Yet one should have full reliance on the One True Allah. Allah is sufficient for man, not a Messenger. This point comes out sharply in the following verse:

﴿قَالَ لَهُمُ ٱلنَّاسُ إِنَّ ٱلنَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا۟ لَكُمْ فَٱخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَـٰنًا وَقَالُوا۟ حَسْبُنَا ٱللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ ٱلْوَكِيلُ ﴿١٧٣﴾﴾

The hypocrites told the believers: 'Verily the unbelievers have gathered against you (a great army), therefore, fear them'. But it only increased them in faith and they said: Allah is sufficient for us, and He is the best disposer of affairs (Al-'Imran, 3:173).

Grace and bounty is related to Allah alone while gift is related to both Allah and His Messenger. One cannot take from him as much as possible. For one has to tum to Allah. This is exclusive to Allah. Even the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is asked:



So when you have finished, stand up for Allah's worship. And to your Lord turn your invocations (Al-Sharh, 95:7-8).

Who would enter Paradise without Reckoning

In the above Qur’anic verse, it is commanded to turn to Allah. He does not ask a creature to turn to another creature. This is, however, permissible in some exceptional cases. Yet it is not the norm. It is preferable for man not to turn to anyone other than Allah. According to the Hadith which spells out the features of those who would enter Paradise without the Reckoning, it is said:

«هُمُ الَّذِين لا يَسْتَرْقُون ، ولا يَكْتَوونَ ، وَلاَ يَتَطَيَّرُونَ ، وَعَلى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ»

"These are the ones who do not indulge in incantation, cauterization, bad omens and they rely only on their Lord." They are not those who do not make supplications yet they do not request others to do so on their behalf. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) used to make supplications for both himself and others. He, however, did not ask someone to do it on his behalf. He directed Ibn Abbas to tum to Allah alone in his need and to seek only His help. Allah alone is to be trusted, invoked for help, feared, looked upon with hope, served and worshipped. No one else has any authority or power. One can get refuge against Him only in His mercy. The Qur'an amply bears out the above points.

Obedience to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

One should obey and love the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), be content with his judgement, hold him in great esteem, follow him and have conviction in the guidance sent down on him. Allah tells:

﴿مَّن يُطِعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ ۖ وَمَن تَوَلَّىٰ فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا ﴿٨٠﴾﴾

He who obeys the Messenger (Muhammad) indeed obeys Allah (Al-Nisa, 4:80).

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ﴾

We sent no Messenger, but to be obeyed with Allah's leave (Al-Nisa, 4:64).

﴿قُلْ إِن كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ
اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُم
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا
يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾﴾

Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, the wealth that you have gained; the commerce in which you fear a decline; and the dwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger, and striving hard and fighting in His cause, then wait until Allah brings about His decision. And Allah does not guide the wicked people (Al-Tawbah, 9:24).

Who would enjoy the taste of faith?

According to Bukhari and Muslim,

«ثَلاَثٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ وَجَدَ حَلاَوَةَ الإِيمَانِ: مَنْ كَانَ اللهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيهِ
مِمَّا سِوَاهُمَا. وَمَنْ كَانَ يُحِبُّ الْمَرْءَ لاَ يُحِبُّهُ إِلا للهِ وَمَنْ كَانَ يَكْرَهُ أَن
يَرْجِعَ فِي الْكُفْرِ بَعدَ إِذْ أَنْقَذَهُ اللهُ مِنْهُ كَمَا يَكْرَهُ أن يُلْقَى فِي النَّارِ»

"One blessed with these three qualities would enjoy the taste of faith: One who holds Allah and His Messenger dearer than everyone else; who loves someone only for the sake of Allah; who would detest reverting to unbelief as he would loathe to fall into fire."

The Prophet said,

«وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى أَكُونَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيهِ مِن وَلَدِهِ
وَوَالِدِهِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِيْنَ» وَقَالَ لَهُ عُمَرُ «يَارَسُولَ اللهِ ، لأَنْتَ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ
كُلِّ شَيءٍ إلا مِنْ نَفْسِي، قَالَ: لاَ يَاعُمَرُ ، حَتَّى أَكُونَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيكَ مِنْ
نَفْسِكَ. قَالَ: فَلأَنْتَ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ نَفْسِي. قَالَ: الآنَ يَاعُمَرُ»

"By Him Who holds my life in His Hands, you cannot attain faith unless you hold me dearer than your children, your parents and everyone."

Umar once submitted to him:

"You are the dearest to me, except my own self" He replied: "No! You should strive unless you hold me dearer than your own self" Umar then said: "You have now become dearer to me than my own self " The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) then endorsed his stance."

Allah says:

﴿ قُلْ إِن كُنتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ﴾

Say (O Muhammad to mankind): 'If you love Allah then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your sins' (Al-'Imran, 3:31).

﴿ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿٨﴾ لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُعَزِّرُوهُ وَتُوَقِّرُوهُ وَتُسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٩﴾ ﴾

Verily, We have sent you (O Muhammad) as a witness, as bearer of glad tidings, and as a warner in order that you may believe in Allah and His Messenger and that you assist and honour him and glorify Allah's praises morning and afternoon (Al-Fath, 48:8-9).

It elucidates that one should believe in both Allah and Hi Messenger; the former be praised and worshipped and the latter be honoured and obeyed.

CHAPTER: MAIN OBJECTIVE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S ADVENT

Allah deputed Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) especially for affirming and upholding monotheism and for extirpating polytheism fully. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was so particular about it that he would not tolerate even its slightest strain in one's expressions. For example, he prohibited people from saying:

«لا يَقُولَنَّ أَحَدُكُم : مَا شَاءَ اللهُ وَشَاءَ مُحَمَّدٌ ، بَلْ مَا شَاءَ اللهُ ثُمَّ شَاءَ مُحَمَّدٌ»

"If Allah and the Messenger will; rather one should say 'If Allah wills and after it if Muhammad wills."

Someone said:

«مَا شَاءَ اللهُ وَشِئْتَ. فَقَالَ: أَجَعَلْتَنِي لِلهِ نِدّاً ؟ قُلْ: مَا شَاءَ اللهُ وَحْدَهُ»

"If Allah and you will." He disapproved it, telling him: "Do you take me as Allah's partner. You should only say: If Allah wills."

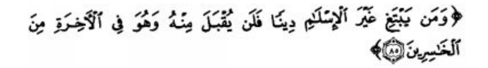
All forms of worship, as prescribed by Allah, are for Him alone and faith should be exclusive to Him:

﴿ وَمَآ أُمِرُوٓاْ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُواْ ٱللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ ٱلدِّينَ حُنَفَآءَ وَيُقِيمُواْ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤْتُواْ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَذَٰلِكَ دِينُ ٱلْقَيِّمَةِ ۝٥ ﴾

And they were commanded not but that they should worship Allah, and worship none but Him alone and offer prayer and give Zakah and that is the Right Religion (AlBaiyinah, 98:5).

Prayer is for Allah alone. So are Zakah, Fast and Hajj.

Islam alone is Allah's religion



﴿وَمَن يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَن يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾﴾

And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will be never accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers (Al-'Imran, 3:85).

The above command is universal in its applicability. For Islam is the faith that has been established down the millenia by all Messengers and believers. Allah makes this point with reference to Messengers such as Nub, Ibraheem, Israel, Musa and Sulaiman. About Nuh (Peace be upon him) the Qur'an states:

﴿۞ وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ نُوحٍ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ إِن كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكُم مَّقَامِي وَتَذْكِيرِي بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَعَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ فَأَجْمِعُوا أَمْرَكُمْ وَشُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُنْ أَمْرُكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ غُمَّةً ثُمَّ اقْضُوا إِلَيَّ وَلَا تُنظِرُونِ ﴿٧١﴾ فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَمَا سَأَلْتُكُم مِّنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ﴾

And recite to them the news of Nuh. When he said to his people: 'O my people, if my stay (with you) and my reminding you of the signs of Allah is hard on you, then I put my trust in Allah. So devise your plot, you and your partners, and let not your plot be in doubt for you. Then pass your sentence on me, and give me no respite. But if you tum away, then no reward I have asked of you, my reward is only from Allah, and I have been commanded to be one of the Muslims (Yunus, 10:71-72).

Regarding Prophet Ibraheem and Israel (Peace be upon them) Allah said:

﴿وَمَن يَرْغَبُ عَن مِّلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَن سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدِ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ يَا بَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمُ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ﴾

And who turns away from the religion of Ibraheem, except him who befools himself. Truly, We chose him in this world and verily, in the Hereafter he will be among the righteous. When his Lord said to him: 'Submit'. He said: 'I have submitted myself to the Lord for the worlds'. And this was enjoined by Ibraheem upon his sons and so did Jacob saying: 0 my sons! Allah has chosen for you the religion, then die not except in the faith of Islam (AlBaqarah, 2:130-132).

The Qur'an tells about Prophet Yusuf (Peace be upon him):

﴿ ۞ رَبِّ قَدْ ءَاتَيْتَنِي مِنَ ٱلْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِن تَأْوِيلِ ٱلْأَحَادِيثِ فَاطِرَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ
وَٱلْأَرْضِ أَنتَ وَلِيِّۦ فِي ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْآخِرَةِ تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ﴾

My Lord! You have indeed bestowed on me the sovereignty, and taught me the interpretation of dreams. You are my protector in this world and in the Next, cause me to die as a Muslim, and join me with the righteous (Yusuf, 12:101).

About Prophet Musa (Peace be upon him) and his community the Qur'an says:

﴿ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يَٰقَوْمِ إِن كُنتُمْ ءَامَنتُم بِٱللَّهِ فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوٓا۟ إِن كُنتُم مُّسْلِمِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾ ﴾

And Moses said: 'O my people! If you have believed in Allah, then put your trust in Him if you are Muslims (Yunus, 10:84).

The Qur'an relates the following about the Israelite prophets:

﴿ إِنَّآ أَنزَلْنَا ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا ٱلنَّبِيُّونَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا۟
لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا۟ وَٱلرَّبَّٰنِيُّونَ وَٱلْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا ٱسْتُحْفِظُوا۟ مِن كِتَٰبِ ٱللَّهِ وَكَانُوا۟
عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَآءَ فَلَا تَخْشَوُا۟ ٱلنَّاسَ وَٱخْشَوْنِ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا۟ بِـَٔايَٰتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا
وَمَن لَّمْ يَحْكُم بِمَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْكَٰفِرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ ﴾

Verily, we did send down the Torah, therein was guidance and light, by which the Prophets, who submitted themselves to Allah's will, judged the Jews and so did the rabbis and the priests, for to

them was entrusted the protection of Allah's Book and they were witnesses thereto. Therefore fear not men but fear Me and sell not My Verses for a miserable price. And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the disbelievers (Al-Maidah, 5:44).

﴿ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ٤٤ ﴾

My Lord! Verily, I have wronged myself, and I submit (in Islam) together with Soloman to Allah, the Lord of the worlds (Al-Naml, 27:44).

Qur'an states about Prophet Jesus's community:

﴿ وَإِذْ أَوْحَيْتُ إِلَى الْحَوَارِيِّينَ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِي وَبِرَسُولِي قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَاشْهَدْ بِأَنَّنَا مُسْلِمُونَ ١١١ ﴾

And when I (Allah) put into the hearts of the Disciples (of Jesus) to believe in Me and My Messenger, they said: 'We believe. And bear witness that we are Muslims (AlMaidah, 5:111).

﴿ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَاتَّبَعَ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَاتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا ١٢٥ ﴾

And who can be better in religion than one who submits his face to Allah and he is a good-doer. And follows the religion of Ibraheem (who worshipped none but Allah alone). And Allah did take Ibraheem as an intimate friend (Al-Nisa, 4:125).

﴿ وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَىٰ تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ١١١ بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ١١٢ ﴾

And they say: 'None shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian'. These are their own desires: Say (O Muhammad to them), 'Produce your proof if you are truthful'. Yes, but whoever submits his

face to Allah and he is a good-doer, then his reward is with his Lord, on such shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve (Al-Baqarah, 2:111-112).

What is 'sincerity' and 'good deed'?

In the above verse, the pharse, 'One who submits his face to Allah' is interpreted in the sense that one performs the prescribed good deed while turning sincerely to Allah and thus attains goodness. Sincerity and good deed constitute the basis of faith. That is, one must not serve anyone other than Allah and offer only the prescribed forms of worship as set out by Allah. One must not invent these of his own. Allah says:

﴿فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا ١١٠﴾

So whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord (Al-Kahf, 18:110).

While making supplications Umar used to say: '0 Lord! Make all my deeds good, exclusive to Yourself and let none have a share in it'.

Elucidating the part of the verse 'that He may test you which of you is best in deed', Fudhail ibn Ayadh said: "Good deeds must consist in both sincerity and perfectness. It is not a good deed if either lacks."

Sincerity means 'for the sake of Allah' and perfectness means 'in accordance with the legal ways of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

The Credal Statement of Islam (Kalimat Shahadat): A Study

These two fundamental truths lie at the heart of the credal statement of Islam:

«شَهَادَةُ أَنْ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلا اللهُ ، وَشَهَادَةُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّداً رَسُولُ اللهِ»

"I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Messenger and His servant."

Once one testifies that there is no god other than Allah, it necessarily means that divinity belongs exclusively to Him. It is therefore not lawful to recognise someone else's divinity in terms of love, attachment, hope, fear, reverence, esteem and inclination. Rather it is essential that faith be exclusively reserved for the One True Supreme Self Who is without any partner. The Qur'an says:

﴿ وَقَٰتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ ٱلدِّينُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنِ ٱنتَهَوْا۟ فَلَا عُدْوَٰنَ إِلَّا عَلَى ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿١٩٣﴾ ﴾

And fight them until there is no more Fitnah, and worship is for Allah (alone) (Al-Baqarah, 2:193).

However, if some part of religion is for Allah and another part for someone else, it constitutes polytheism. A definition of perfect religion is found in the Hadith cited by Tirmidhi:

«مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِلهِ ، وَأَبْغَضَ لِلهِ ، وَأَعْطَى لِلهِ ، وَمَنَعَ لِلهِ ، فَقَدِ اسْتَكْمَلَ الإِيمَانَ»

"One who loves and hates for the sake of Allah, and gives and stops for the sake of Allah, perfects his faith".

A believer loves Allah and for the sake of Allah only whereas a polytheist loves others alongwith Allah, as the following Qur'anic verse sets forth:

﴿ وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَٱلَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوٓا۟ أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِّلَّهِ ۗ﴾

And of mankind are some who take others besides Allah as rivals. They love them as they love Allah. But those who believe love Allah more (Al-Baqarah, 2:165).

Meaning of Obedience to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

By testifying Muhammad's messengership one is obliged to affirm all his teachings, follow him in all respects and observe all that he asks us to do. Likewise one should shun all that is forbidden by him; Allah be addressed with only such attributes which he has described; and reject His resemblance to creatures as indicated by him. Also, one should believe in things as lawful and unlawful as prescribed by Allah and His Messenger. Polytheists therefore stand condemned in Surahs Al-An'am and Al-A'raf. For they take such things as lawful which Allah has prohibited. Similarly they are guilty of taking as unlawful which Allah has made lawful. Allah says:

﴿ وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ مِنَ الْحَرْثِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ نَصِيبًا فَقَالُوا هَٰذَا لِلَّهِ بِزَعْمِهِمْ وَهَٰذَا لِشُرَكَائِنَا ۖ فَمَا كَانَ لِشُرَكَائِهِمْ فَلَا يَصِلُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ۖ وَمَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ فَهُوَ يَصِلُ إِلَىٰ شُرَكَائِهِمْ ۗ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ ﴾

And they assign to Allah a share of the tilth and cattle which He has created, and they say, "This is for Allah according to their pretending, and this is for our (Allah's so called) partners. But the share of their partners reaches not Allah, whereas the share of Allah reaches their partners. Evil is the way they judge! (Al-An'am 6:136).

﴿ أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ شَرَعُوا لَهُم مِّنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَن بِهِ اللَّهُ ﴾

Have they partners with Allah, who have instituted for them a religion which Allah has not allowed (Al-Shura, 42:21).

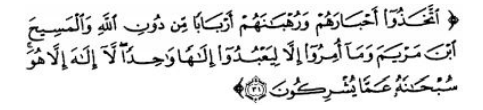
Allah told Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿٤٥﴾ وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ
وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا ﴿٤٦﴾ ﴾

"We have truly sent you as a witness, a bearer of glad tidings, and a warner -and as one who invites to Allah by His leave and as a lamp Spreading Light" (Al-Ahzab, 33:45-46).

A Practitioner of Innovation is Necessarily a Polytheist

The above verse tells the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) that he has been entrusted with the duty of inviting people to follow Allah's command. So one asking people to follow someone besides Allah commits polytheism. And one who does it without Allah's command commits innovation. Polytheism and innovation are intertwined. Never has there been a practitioner of innovation who is not guilty of some form of polytheism. This point is made by Allah:



They (Jews and Christians) took their rabbis and monks to be their lords besides Allah and Messiah, son of Mary, while they were commanded to worship none but One God. Praise and glory be to Him, (far above is He) from having the partners they associate (Al-Tawbah, 9:31).

Their taking the rabbis and monks as partners with God lay in their unquestioning obedience to them and abiding by what they prescribed as lawful and unlawful, in contravention of the Divine Law. Allah says:

﴿ قاتلوا الذين لا يؤمنون بالله ولا باليوم الآخر ولا يحرمون ما حرم الله ورسوله ولا يدينون دين الحق ﴾

Fight against those who believe not in Allah, not in the Last Day nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger and those who acknowledge not the religion of the truth (Al-Tawbah, 9:29)

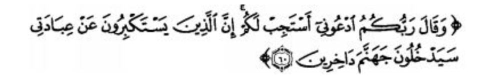
In the above verse, disbelief in Allah and the Hereafter is equated with the failure to abide by what Allah and His Messenger have declared as unlawful and with the rejection of the religion of truth. Believers, however, affirm the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) in his teachings about Allah and the Hereafter, obey him altogether, observe what is prescribed as forbidden by Allah and His Messenger and surrender themselves to the religion of truth.

Islam A Study

Literally Islam means to surrender oneself, to obey and to make religion exclusive for Allah.

Thus, for one who claims his affirmation of Islam, it is essential that he should surrender himself fully to the One True Allah, without any portion for someone else. This is the essence of the credal statement of Islam. However, one pledging obedience to both Allah and others besides Him commits polytheism. It is common knowledge that Allah would not forgive polytheism. And one refusing to surrender himself to Allah acts arrogantly.

Allah says:


﴿وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾﴾

And your Lord said: 'Invoke Me, (believing in My Oneness) I would respond to you'. Verily! Those who are arrogant to My worship (do not invoke Me, and do not believe in My Oneness) they will surely enter hell in humiliation. (Al-Ghafir, 40:60).

Arrogance is defined thus in Sahih al-Bukhari: 'The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«لاَ يَدْخُلُ الجَنَّةَ مَنْ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ كِبْرٍ. وَلاَ يَدْخُلُ النَّارَ مَنْ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ إِيمَانٍ. فَقِيلَ لَهُ: يَارَسُولَ اللهِ ، الرَّجُلُ يُحِبُّ أن يَكُونَ ثَوبُهُ حَسَناً وَنَعْلُه حَسَناً. أَفَمِنَ الْكِبْرِ ذاكَ؟ قَالَ: لا. إِنَّ اللهَ جَمِيلٌ يُحِبُّ الجَمَالَ، الكِبْرُ بَطَرُ الحَقِّ ، وغَمْطُ النَّاسِ»

"One with even an iota of arrogance would not enter Paradise. One with even an iota of faith in his heart would not enter Hell." It was asked: "O Messenger of Allah! If someone desires that his dress and shoes be good, does it amount to be arrogance?" To this he replied:

"No! Allah is Most Beautiful and loves beauty. Arrogance consists in denying the truth and in looking down upon others."

Jews are characterised by their arrogance and Christians by their polytheism. About the Jews Allah declares:

﴿أَفَكُلَّمَا جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَىٰ أَنفُسُكُمُ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ﴾

What, would you disobey arrogantly when a Messenger brings you a command which is not to your liking. (AlBaqarah, 2:87).

Regarding Christians, Allah says:

﴿اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَٰهًا وَاحِدًا لَّا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣١﴾﴾

They took their rabbis and monks to be their Lords besides Allah and Messiah, son of Mary, while they were commanded to worship none but One God. Praise and glory be to Him, (far above is He) from having partners they associate (Al-Tawbah, 9:31).

﴿قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾﴾

Say: 'O People of the Scripture (Jews and Christians): Come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partners with Him and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah. Then, if they tum away, say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims' (Al-'Imran, 3:64).

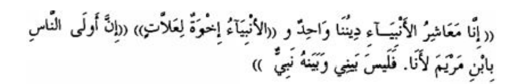
Islam is defined thus:

﴿ قُولُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا بِٱللَّهِ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡنَا وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰٓ إِبۡرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسۡمَٰعِيلَ وَإِسۡحَٰقَ
وَيَعۡقُوبَ وَٱلۡأَسۡبَاطِ وَمَآ أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَآ أُوتِيَ ٱلنَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمۡ لَا
نُفَرِّقُ بَيۡنَ أَحَدٖ مِّنۡهُمۡ وَنَحۡنُ لَهُۥ مُسۡلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ فَإِنۡ ءَامَنُواْ بِمِثۡلِ مَآ ءَامَنتُم بِهِۦ فَقَدِ
ٱهۡتَدَواْۖ وَّإِن تَوَلَّوۡاْ فَإِنَّمَا هُمۡ فِي شِقَاقٖۖ فَسَيَكۡفِيكَهُمُ ٱللَّهُۚ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ
ٱلۡعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣٧﴾ صِبۡغَةَ ٱللَّهِ وَمَنۡ أَحۡسَنُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ صِبۡغَةٗۖ وَنَحۡنُ لَهُۥ عَٰبِدُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾
قُلۡ أَتُحَآجُّونَنَا فِي ٱللَّهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمۡ وَلَنَآ أَعۡمَٰلُنَا وَلَكُمۡ أَعۡمَٰلُكُمۡ وَنَحۡنُ لَهُۥ
مُخۡلِصُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ ﴾

Say (O Muslims), 'We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and to the tribes (the twelve sons of Jacob), and that which has been given to Moses and Jesus, and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have submitted (in Islam). So if they believe in the like of that which you believe, then they are rightly guided, but if they tum away, then they are only in opposition. So Allah will suffice you against them. And He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (Our colour is) the colour of Allah and which colour can be better than Allah's. And we are His worshippers. Say: 'Dispute you with us about Allah while He is our Lord and your Lord? And we are to be rewarded for our deeds and you for your deeds. And we are sincere to Him in worship and obedience (Al-Baqarah, 2:136-139).

CHAPTER: Basis of divine faith

Since the basis of divine religions, is same, notwithstanding the variations in the Law, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) aptly remarked:



'The religions of all messengers are identical; and the prophets are as brothers. I am the one most closely related to Jesus, son of Mary, for no Messenger appeared in the period intervening between me and him'.

The faith of all Messengers is same-the One True Allah be worshipped and He be served in accordance with the modes prescribed in each period by Him. It would represent the Islam of the day.

As to the principle of abrogation of Shariah, it is similar to the abrogation of one command with other in the same Shariah. For example, Islam preached by Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is throughout the same. Yet in the beginning Bait al-Maqdis was the Qibla for the Salat which was replaced by Ka'ba. It is unlawful now to pray while facing the former. Notwithstanding this change, Islam as religion remains essentially the same. Likewise, Allah prescribed for the Israelites Saturday as Sabbath; it was substituted later by Friday. The congregation previously held on Saturdays was shifted to Friday and the former is now deemed as unlawful. Whoever deviated from the Mosaic Law before this change was effected, was not Muslim. Likewise, one who fails to observe the Shariah prescribed by Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) which is mere a changed form of previous Shariah, is no longer a Muslim.

Allah never directed any Messenger to worship anyone other than Him:

﴿ ۞ شَرَعَ لَكُم مِّنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّىٰ بِهِۦ نُوحًا وَالَّذِيٓ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا
بِهِۦٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰٓ أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ مَا
تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ ﴾

He has ordained for you the same religion which He did for Noah, and that which We have revealed to you (O Muhammad) and that which We did for Abraham, Moses and Jesus, saying, you should establish religion and make no divisions in it. Intolerable for polytheists is that to which you call them (Al-Shura, 42:13).

All Messengers were asked to establish religion and avoid any divisions in it:

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَٰتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَٰلِحًا إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ۝٥١ وَإِنَّ
هَٰذِهِۦٓ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَٰحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ ۝٥٢ ﴾

O Messengers! Eat of the lawful things, and do righteous deeds. Verily! I am well-acquainted with what you do. And verily! This your religion is one religion, and I am your Lord. So keep your duty to Me (Al-Muminun, 23:51-52).

﴿ فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ
اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۝٣٠ ﴾

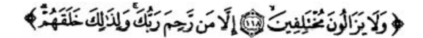
So set you (O Muhammad) your face towards the religion of pure Islamic monotheism exclusively, Allah's fitrah with which He has created mankind. No change let there be in Allah's creation, that is the Straight Religion, but most of men know not (Al-Rum, 30:30).

﴿ ۞ مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَوٰةَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ۝٣١
مِنَ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ ۝٣٢ ﴾

Always turn in repentance to Him, and be fearful of and dutiful to Him, and offer prayers perfectly and be not of polytheists. Of those who split up their religion and became sects, each sect rejoicing in that which is with it (Al-Rum, 30:31-32).

Divisions among polytheists

While the polytheists are a divided lot, the sincere servants of Allah are united, as Allah tells:



They (polytheists) will not cease to disagree except those upon whom your Lord has bestowed His mercy and for that He did create them (Hud, 11:118-119).

Thus those endowed with Allah's mercy are united whereas the polytheists have many dissensions and sects in their faith. As a matter of fact, polytheism and innovation always cause division and dissension. Each polytheistic tribe of Arabia had its own god which was loathed by other tribes. Some of these followed different law. For example, the Madinan's polytheists invoked Manat and disliked to perform tawaf between Safa and Marwah. The Qur'an later commanded them to do so.

Those falling prey to polytheism cannot have unity. This is evident from the conduct of those who take the graves and places associated with the Messengers and the pious as mosques. Each group of theirs visits a place which is not sacred for the other group.

Conduct of monotheists

In contrast, monotheists worship the One True Allah and do not take any as His partner. Even a point of divergent opinions among them does not result in opposition and division in that they recognise that such a difference of opinion, stemming from sound principles, is rewarding. Those whose interpretation is correct would get two rewards and the others would get one reward and be forgiven their lapses. Allah alone is the object of their worship whom they serve, rely upon, fear, look to and invoke for help and assistance. They address all supplications to Him, ask Him for all they want. While they enter mosques for prayers they seek His grace and pleasure. Allah spells out these features of theirs:

﴿ تَرَىٰهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَرِضْوَٰنًا ﴾

You see them bowing and prostrating themselves, seeking Allah's bounty and His good pleasure (Al-Fath, 48:29).

Similarly, in journeying to the three most sacred mosques, especially the Ka'ba as part of Hajj, their only objective is to seek Allah's pleasure and bounty. They are not attracted to anyone besides Him. Nor do they put hope in or fear anyone else.

Satan has, however, misled many a people. Distracting them from the path of sincerity he has made them commit polytheism of one sort or another. In their journey they seek to please someone other than Allah and are inclined to them. So in travelling towards the real or fake grave of a Messenger or saint, their intention is to supplicate to them and to draw their attention to their case. There are some who undertake Hajj for visiting a grave of someone and some consider this visiting even better than Hajj itself.

Leaders of misguidance

Some of their religious leaders intend to perform Hajj but return home after visiting only Madina, believing it as something superior to Hajj. Some regard a visit to graves as obligatory and invoke the dead bodies in a manner one would address an eternal person. They offer their children and cattle at graves, as was the custom of the Arab polytheists.

Many custodians of graves mislead ignorant people by telling them that they would present petitions on their behalf to the dead person who would forward it to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) who, in turn, would refer the matter to Allah. Some offer curtains and sheets at graves, though such practices are unanimously considered as unlawful by all Muslims. Mosques lie unattended while graves attract huge crowds. Some believe that it is far better to pray near a grave, which they perceive as sacred, than in a mosque, the very house of Allah. Therefore they assemble there in large numbers for prayers and supplications. This is done in the face of the Prophet's explicit prohibition that graves be not taken as places of worship. They abandon praying in mosques, though it is commanded by Allah that His name be exalted and remembered there.

Some of these religious leaders even say that while Ka'ba is the direction of prayers for the commoners, the select people should take the grave of such and such saint as the direction of prayer and put Ka'ba behind. Such utterances, according to the consensus of all Ulema, betray unbelief. These points need further elaboration which is, however, not possible here owing to the constraints of space. We have drawn attention to the fundamental principles while a detailed discussion may be found in other relevant works. We have confined this work to addressing the objectives of Shariah, role of sincerity of faith in Allah, worshipping only the One True Allah, and extirpating

all forms of polytheism and innovation. For this constitutes Islam and is the essence of the faith preached by all the messengers of the doctrine of monotheism, believing in the Lord of the worlds.

Misconstruing monotheism

Many among the scholastics and those practising innovation have seriously misconstrued monotheism. Some of them interpret it in terms opposed to its real meaning. Some Sufis even contend that the monotheism of the Lord is the main objective, and absorption in Him is the end. And once one discerns this monotheism, he is no longer bound by the concepts of good and evil. As a result of this view, all the rules pertaining to enjoining good and forbidding evil, and reward and punishment are suspended.

They misconstrue it for they fail to distinguish between the divine will encompassing all His creatures and His love and pleasure which is special to some. In other words, it is prompted by their inability to note the difference between His commands about the intention governing both the virtuous and sinners and about those especially for the Messengers and saints. However, it is obligatory upon every servant of Allah to testify both the lordship and divinity of Allah. The former covers everyone, believers and disbelievers alike, while the latter is specific to His believing servants who worship and obey Him and follow His Messengers. Allah says:

﴿ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ
الْمُتَّقِينَ كَالْفُجَّارِ ﴿٢٨﴾ ﴾

Shall We treat those who believe and do righteous deeds as those who make mischief on earth? Or shall We treat the pious and the wicked alike? (Sad, 38:28)

﴿ أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَن نَّجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءً مَّحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ ﴾

Do the evil-doers think that We shall hold them equal with the believers who do righteous deeds - in this life and after their death? Worst is the judgement they make (AlJathiyah, 45:21).

﴿أَفَنَجْعَلُ ٱلْمُسْلِمِينَ كَٱلْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾ مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ أَمْ لَكُمْ كِتَٰبٌ فِيهِ تَدْرُسُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ إِنَّ لَكُمْ فِيهِ لَمَا تَخَيَّرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ أَمْ لَكُمْ أَيْمَٰنٌ عَلَيْنَا بَٰلِغَةٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ إِنَّ لَكُمْ لَمَا تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ سَلْهُمْ أَيُّهُم بِذَٰلِكَ زَعِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَآءُ فَلْيَأْتُوا۟ بِشُرَكَآئِهِمْ إِن كَانُوا۟ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴿٤١﴾﴾

Shall We then treat the Muslims like the wicked? What is the matter with you? How do you judge? Or have you a Book through which you learn. That you shall have all that you choose? Or you have oaths from Us, reaching to the Day of Resurrection that yours will be what you judge. Ask them, which of them will stand surety for that! Or have they partners? Then let them bring their partners, if they are truthful (Al-Qalam, 68:35-41).

One failing to discriminate between the friends and enemies of Allah, between His approved faith and good deeds and disapproved polytheism and disobedience, though His sovereignty, intention and creation encompasses all, is liable to join the ways of polytheists.

Belief in predestination

One must believe in predestination and must not resent it. It is incumbent on a servant of Allah to turn to Him in his crisis, bear it patiently and seek His forgiveness for his sins and lapses, as Allah directs:

﴿ فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنبِكَ ﴾

So be patient. Verily, the Promise of Allah is true, and seek forgiveness for your faults (Ghafir, 40:55).

It was on the basis of this argument that Adam convinced Moses in responding to his reproach why he had put the whole mankind into trial by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree. Adam replied that it had been pre-ordained, as the Qur'an foretells:

﴿ مَا أَصَابَ مِن مُّصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَن نَّبْرَأَهَا ۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ ﴾

No calamity befalls the earth or yourselves but is inscribed in the Book of decrees, before We bring it into existence. Verily, that is easy for Allah (Al-Hadid, 57:22).

﴿ مَا أَصَابَ مِن مُّصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَن يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾ ﴾

No calamity befalls but with Allah's leave and whoever believes in Allah, He guides his heart (Al-Taqhabun, 64:11).

Some earlier Ulema take the above-quoted verses to mean that on being faced with some calamity a servant of Allah should accept it as something ordained by Allah and surrender himself totally. Adam's earlier account illustrates the same. Obviously no one, ranging from

Prophet Adam to an ordinary believer, can explain it away as the sins to be the consequence of Divine decree. Were this line of argument sound, Satan and all his followers would have pleaded the same pretext. Likewise, all the rebellious people of the community of Noah, 'Ad and Thamud would take recourse to it. If this argument is admitted, no one can be punished for his mistakes.

Those subscribing to this view of predestination on being oppressed, should not protest or resent, considering it to be preordained. However, they would raise voice against the oppressor and seek justice against him. If such a view of destiny is held as admissible, it would make life difficult. For everyone would be at liberty to take away others' life, honour and possessions.

Distorting monotheism

A group of those practising innovation rejects divine attributes as part of monotheism whereas another group of them rules out obedience to divine commands. On analysing their viewpoint it emerges that they do not maintain any distinction between the Creator and the created. They uphold the erroneous view of pantheism and believe in transmigration of soul. In the face of such outrageous beliefs they also claim to profess faith in monotheism. They have gone far away in polytheism, pretension and falsehood.

They promote their erroneous view by holding that initially a seeker of truth distinguishes between obedience and disobedience in that he abides by divine commands and avoids sins. He then passes on to the next stage where sin does not exist and only obedience prevails. In all his actions he is guided by divine predestination. Later on, the truth unveils and he discovers that there is nothing good or bad in itself. There is no demarcating line between obedience and disobedience, and between the Creator and the creature. The whole universe represents a single unit with the presence of Allah in everything and all is identified with Him.

This is a serious error into which many have fallen. Guided by divine help one may, however, easily avoid such pitfalls.

One who abides by divine commands, believes in His names and attributes, which make Him unique and distinct from any similitude to creatures, is on guidance, endowed with the monotheism with which all Messengers were sent and which is at the core of all Scriptures. Allah elucidates this point in Surahs Al-Ikhlas and Al-Kafirun.

Division of the Qur'an

In so far as the content of the Qur’an, it is made up of three parts -one devoted to monotheism, the other to stories and third to commands and prohibitions. Surah Al-Ikhlas is the essence of one-third of the Qur’an as the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) pointed it out, for this Surah affirms the divine Self and His names and attributes. It is a concise verbal statement of monotheism.

﴿قُلْ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝١ ٱللَّهُ ٱلصَّمَدُ ۝٢ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝٣ وَلَمْ
يَكُن لَّهُۥ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌۢ ۝٤﴾

Say (O Muhammad): He is Allah, the One, the SelfSufficient. He begets not, nor was He begotten, and there is no co-equal or comparable unto Him (Al-Ikhlas, 112:1-4).

Surah Al-Kafirun represents a practical manifestation of monotheism. Here the sincere believers who worship the One True Allah are seen standing apart from the polytheists who serve both Allah and those besides Him. Though they believe in the Lordship of the Lord of the worlds, but this is not sufficient. They need to believe in the divinity of the One True Allah also. Their polytheism proceeds from their failure to do so hence they are different from the believers, believing in both Lordship and Divinity:

﴿قُلْ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْكَٰفِرُونَ ۝١ لَآ أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ۝٢ وَلَآ أَنتُمْ عَٰبِدُونَ مَآ
أَعْبُدُ ۝٣ وَلَآ أَنَا۠ عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدتُّمْ ۝٤ وَلَآ أَنتُمْ عَٰبِدُونَ مَآ أَعْبُدُ ۝٥ لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ
وَلِىَ دِينِ ۝٦﴾

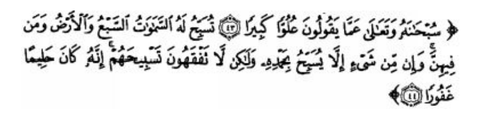
Say: O Disbelievers! I worship not that which you worship, nor will you worship that which I worship. And I shall not worship that which you are worshipping. Nor will you worship that which I worship. To you be your religion, and to me my religion (Islamic monotheism) (AlKafirun, 109:1-6).

Guidance of Messengers and errors of philosophers

Messengers have come with the mission of comprehensive affirmation and concise rejection. They expound in detail the names and attributes of Allah and rule out any similitude. As opposed to them, philosophers hardly affirm it but they are more interested in negation. For them the Divine One is not like this or that. On discussing positive attributes they tend to talk in the air. Whatever they say is full of contradiction. Glory be to Allah, the Lord of Honour, above all that they attribute, and blessings be upon Messenger and all praise be to the Lord of the worlds.

The way of Messengers and of the Qur'an is transparent. Asserting positively the Qur'an presents Allah as the Living, Eternal, All-Knowing, All-Wise, All-Forgiving, All-Merciful, All-Hearing, All-Seeing, the Exalted and the Great. He is the Creator of the who1e universe, Master of the Mighty Throne, Who spoke to Moses, and focused His refulgence on the mountain. He is pleased with the believers and angry with the disbelievers.

As regards negation, the Qur'an rules out anyone being similar, equal to Him in His Self, Names and Attributes:



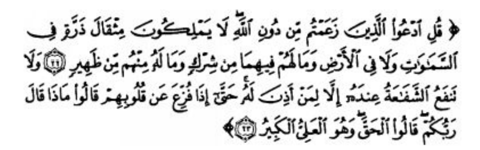
Glorified and High be from (the great falsehood) that they say. The seven heavens and the earth and all that is therein glorify Him, and there is not a thing but glorifies His praise. But you understand not their glorification. Truly, He is All-Forbearing, Oft-Forgiving (Al-Isra, 17:43-44).

A believer has full conviction in Allah and in His most beautiful names. Employing the same he makes his supplications and does not deviate from these. Allah makes the same point thus:

﴿ وَلِلَّهِ ٱلْأَسْمَآءُ ٱلْحُسْنَىٰ فَٱدْعُوهُ بِهَا ۖ وَذَرُوا۟ ٱلَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِىٓ أَسْمَـٰٓئِهِۦ ۚ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ ﴾

And all the most beautiful names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny His names. (Al-A'raf, 7:180)

A believer calls on only the One True Allah, worships Him never associating any as His partner and shuns all forms of polytheism:



﴿ قُلِ ٱدْعُوا۟ ٱلَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ فِى ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَلَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِيهِمَا مِن شِرْكٍ وَمَا لَهُۥ مِنْهُم مِّن ظَهِيرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَا تَنفَعُ ٱلشَّفَـٰعَةُ عِندَهُۥٓ إِلَّا لِمَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُۥ ۚ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا فُزِّعَ عَن قُلُوبِهِمْ قَالُوا۟ مَاذَا قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ۖ قَالُوا۟ ٱلْحَقَّ ۖ وَهُوَ ٱلْعَلِىُّ ٱلْكَبِيرُ ﴿٢٣﴾ ﴾

Say (O Muhammad): Call upon those whom you assert besides Allah, they possess not even the weight of an atom- either in the heavens or on the earth, nor have they any share in either, nor there is for Him any supporter from among them. Intercession with Him profits not, except for him whom He permits. Until when fear is banished from their (angels') heart, they say: 'What is that your Lord has said?' They say: 'The Truth'. And He is the Most High, the Most Great (Saba, 34:22-23).

What a believer should do

These are some brief points of which details are very important, though it is not possible to discuss these here. A believer should strive to gain knowledge and faith, taking Allah as his Guide, Helper and Patron. For He is the best Patron and best Helper. And He suffices as the Guide and Guardian.

One should better make supplication in the words employed by the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) which are reported on the authority of Ayesha. When the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) used to rise for prayer at night he would supplicate:

«أنَّ النَّبيَّ ﷺ كَانَ إذَا قَامَ يُصَلِّي مِنَ اللَّيلِ يَقُولُ: اللهُمَّ رَبَّ جَبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَائِيلَ وَإِسْرَافِيلَ ، فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ والأَرْضِ ، عَالِمَ الغَيْبِ والشَّهَادَةِ. أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ، اهْدِنِي لِمَا اخْتُلِفَ فِيهِ مِنَ الحَقِّ بِإِذْنِكَ . إِنَّكَ تَهْدِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ إِلى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ»

O Allah, the Master of Jibrail, Mikail and Israfail, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, the Knower of the seen and the unseen, You judge among Your servants concerning which they differ. Guide me to discern the truth which has been clouded owing to differences. You direct him to the Right Path whom You will (Muslim).

Allah says:

﴿ كَانَ ٱلنَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَٰحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنزَلَ مَعَهُمُ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ بِٱلْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ فِيمَا ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فِيهِ ۚ وَمَا ٱخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْهُمُ ٱلْبَيِّنَـٰتُ بَغْيًۢا بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ فَهَدَى ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لِمَا ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فِيهِ مِنَ ٱلْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِۦ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ يَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢١٣﴾ ﴾

Mankind were one community and Allah sent Prophets with glad tidings and warnings, and with them He sent the Scripture in truth to judge between people in matters wherein they differed. And only

those to whom (the Scripture) was given differed concerning it after clear proofs had come unto them through hatred, one to another. Then Allah by His leave guided those who believed in the truth of that wherein they differed. And Allah guides whom He will to a Straight Path (AlBaqarah, 2:213).

«وَالْحَمْدُ لِلهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ. وَالصَّلاَةُ وَالسَّلاَمُ عَلى سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ كُلَّ وَقْتٍ وَحِينٍ آمِينَ»

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds and blessings and peace be upon the leader of the Messengers all the time (Ameen).